

Module 05 – 29 Responsibility - New vs. Old – Hell 3

Session 29

We are going to continue to look at the thorny subject of “hell”

A concept that is readily excepted in most if not all religions and in society generally

➔ **We will find that the traditional view of “hell” is the product of the false concept of an angry and vengeful God**

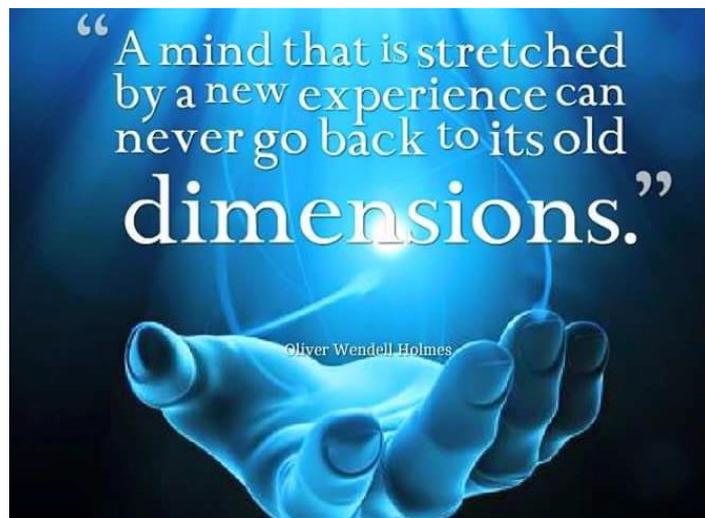
Excellent free resources on the topic of “hell”

- Raising Hell <http://www.raisinghellbook.com/>
- Brazen Church “Hell in a hand basket” <http://brazenchurch.com/hell-in-the-bible/>
- A New Day Dawning blog - Chuck Crisco www.anewdaydawning.com/blog-1/?category=Hell%3F
- Tentmaker website .
- <http://www.tentmaker.org/articles/ifhellisreal.htm>
- <http://www.tentmaker.org/ScholarsCorner.html>

God is not angry with us He is always the same, loving, faithful and full of grace and mercy He has never changed

When we engage God intimately He will reveal Himself in continually new, surprising and sometimes even shocking ways but we can trust Him

Eph 3:16-18 I desire for you to become intimately acquainted with the love of Christ on the **deepest possible level**; far **beyond the reach of a mere academic, intellectual grasp**. So that you may be filled with all the fullness of God! Awaken to the consciousness of his closeness! **Separation is an illusion! Oneness was God’s idea all along!**



2 Cor 10:5 ... The dynamic of our strategy is revealed in God's ability to disengage mindsets and perceptions that have held people captive in pseudo fortresses for centuries! Every lofty idea and argument positioned against the knowledge of God is cast down and exposed to be a mere invention of our own imagination.

- I am not saying that everyone goes direct to heaven regardless of a having a relationship with Jesus
- I am not saying that this life does not affect what happens in the after life
- I am not saying that there is not place where not-yet-believers go after death but that place is not "hell"

There is clearly a difference in what happens to believers and not-yet-believers in the after life but that does not mean they are separated from God in eternal punishment and conscious torment

Try not to see through the filters of previous beliefs but be open to the Spirit of truth Himself to unveil your eyes

Historically the bible has been the main source of our views of God so how it is translated into English is a key issue

- **Religion has used mistranslated bible verses to distort who God is and that affects our relationship with Him and also damages our own identity**
- **We need to experience God in intimacy if we are to really know the Truth**

Until quite recently, English Bibles were translated from a version of the Greek New Testament called the Textus Receptus

It was formed from just 6 Greek manuscripts and was supplemented by translations of Vulgate Latin texts back into Greek.

By contrast, modern Greek bible texts make use of over 5,800 Greek manuscripts but unfortunately modern translations are still greatly influenced by religious tradition

- If you want to know what the bible is really saying it is important to find out what the root meaning of the words are. What are the thoughts that they are meant to convey and what was the common spoken meaning at the time?
- Just studying will not produce a relationship; we need to engage the Holy Spirit and the living word of God Jesus, who is the author and completer of our faith by encounters

So far we have seen that the word "hell" is not biblical

The doctrines of hell as eternal torment were not a widely held view for the first five centuries after Christ

We have covered Jesus' use of Gehenna all of which were describing a physical location not "hell" a place of eternal punishment

What about the other teachings of Jesus that have been used to promote "hell" and eternal punishment and torment?

Some other words and ideas have been used to convey the “hell” concept usually parables

There are also several passages of scripture that suggest a “hell” like narrative without actually using the word “hell”

Weeping, Gnashing of Teeth & Outer Darkness mentioned in Matthew 8, 13, 22, 24, 25 and Luke 13.

Is this really a description of “hell” or is there another more likely meaning?

- **When looking at these passages it is easy to default to what you have always been taught they meant**
- **It is hard not to operate in conformational bias but the bible can interpret itself if we let it do so**

Matthew 8:11-12 I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Acts 7:51 You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 52 Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him

Act 7:54 When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.

- This particular language is used in reference to the **religious elite** and their response to the Gospel.
- Virtually every time Jesus mentions “gnashing of teeth”, He is talking to or about the religious elite.
- Jesus is focusing on those who would identify themselves as “sons of the kingdom” while rejecting His ministry.
- **They were the Pharisees, Sadducees, Priests, Levites, Lawyers, Rabbis etc.**
- **Jesus’ figurative warnings, are not made towards the sinners but the self-righteous religious leaders**

He said “I did not come to call the (self) righteous, but sinners.”

His response to the adulteress is, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

Why would we think “weeping and gnashing or grinding of teeth” is a reference to physical torture in hell?

- ➔ I am not suggesting that you have to study all this out yourselves but go and ask God Himself face to face to reveal the truth
- ➔ We can all ask God to unveil our minds and deconstruct the pillars that frame our beliefs and mindsets from the DIY Tree religious perspective

Jesus tells the **Pharisees, the religious elite** they cannot escape Gehenna and offers parable after parable warning of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matt 24:51 Jesus describes the religious leaders as hypocrites He is telling them that they will not get what they expect by being self-righteous

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them.

So to be cast out was to be outside of the covenant relationship which was figuratively to be in outer darkness

They would weep and grind teeth in self-righteous anger and anguish having failed to heed Jesus

They will be angry and frustrated when they discover that their religious system of laws and works has become obsolete

They continued to use the temple and the veil of separation and persecuted the early church and tried to get them back under the law through Judaisers

- ➔ **There is nothing in these texts about “hell” or eternal punishment**

Jesus spoke about many things in parables which are short stories which illustrate one or more points, lessons or principles

It differs from a fable in that fables employ animals, plants, inanimate objects, or forces of nature as characters, whereas parables have human characters.

Medieval interpreters of the Bible often treated Jesus' parables as allegories, with symbolic meanings found for every element in His parables.

Most modern scholars, regard their interpretations as incorrect and that Jesus' parables are mostly intended to make a single important point

A parable uses metaphors or figures of speech or similes, i.e. something is said to be "like" something else (e.g. "The just man is like a tree planted by streams of water)

We should not just assume a literal meaning or accept the traditional interpretation

- ➔ **We should not use parables to create or prove a doctrinal position because it is so easy to make conformationally biased interpretations**
- ➔ Unfortunately parables in spite of their symbolic nature have frequently been used to created doctrines which was never their purpose

Parables have been wrongly used to affirm important theological issues like:

- The nature of divine judgment
- The state of the after life

- 'hell' (hades) as an inescapable place of God's fiery judgment and punishment

When looking at parables we need to look with fresh eyes to see what Jesus is actually meaning

- Who is being addressed?
- Jews, gentiles, religious leaders, everyone in Jesus day, everyone through history?
- Was the context specific to that time or is it applicable now?
- Was it using OT or local symbolism?
- Was it referring to pre-cross issues or old covenant ideas?
- What is the true meaning of the actual words used in these stories are the words translated accurately do they keep their original meanings?
- Have the English words been mistranslated or misinterpreted because of a pre-existing view and conformational bias?

The context of many parables was that they were directed towards religious leaders of Jesus day

- They challenged their DIY religion
- They challenged their traditions
- They challenged their religiosity
- They challenged their attitudes
- They challenged their heart motives and values

Parable of the Sheep and the goats

This was part of a dialogue read in Matt 21-25 with the religious leaders and then continued when the disciples asked Jesus questions about what He meant
Was the overall point of this parable "hell" and final judgment or about the end of the old covenant obsolete system of law?

To gain a better understand of what Jesus taught, we need to look at the context of Jesus' statements in Matthew 21 & 23

- **These were mostly directed at the religious leaders and they were referring to that specific generation**

In Matt 21-23, Jesus brings many charges against the Jewish leaders for their mistreatment of God's Law and leading people astray

He then concludes by prophesying the **consequences of their errors**

This dialogue was very challenging to the religious leaders

Matt 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures 'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes'? 43 Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.

Matt 21:44 And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.” 45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. 46 When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet.

Matt 23:34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth ... 36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation

The Jewish leaders had killed God's messengers in the past the current crop were just as bad as their forefathers, they were just as guilty
The consequences for killing God's messengers would fall upon that very generation
These were the curses of the old covenant referred to in Deut 28 and it uses that symbolic language

The teachings in Matt 21-25 are framed by what is called eschatology, the understanding of the end times or last things

- **How we view eschatology will influence our interpretation of the parables**
- **The kingdom of God that was at hand in His ministry, was Jesus' main focus**

There are 4 common paradigms that often determine our theological understanding of prophecy and how the bible is framed

- Futurist,
- Historicist,
- Partial Preterist or
- Preterists

Those views are linked to the interpretation of one passage in Revelation 20:2-4,7 that talks of a 1000 year period with devil bound and Jesus reigning that produced 3 views:

- Premillennial,
- Amillennial or
- Postmillennial

Rev 20:2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; 4 Then I saw thrones, .. and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 ... but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

All these various ideas are used to interpret whether scriptures and prophecies are talking about something still in the future or something that has already taken place when looking from our present perspectives

The **defeatist rescue-me-through-the-rapture teaching** is obviously opposite to the more victorious view that the kingdom will fill the earth and restored through the sons of God

Futurists teach that most things are still in the future particularly when interpreting Matt 24 and Revelation

All references to the end refer to the end of time, the rapture or the second coming of Jesus

They are either dispensational, pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation or post-tribulation **premillennialists** and are looking for a literal fulfilments of the antichrist etc.

Historicists are generally postmillennialists and believe that most of Matt 24 occurred in AD70

Historicism teaches that biblical predictions are being fulfilled throughout history and continue to be fulfilled today.

The Book of Revelation is a pre-written history of the Church from the time of its writing to the future Second coming of Christ

Historicism is a method of interpretation of biblical prophecies that associates symbols with historical persons, nations or events

Historicists believe that the Papacy is the Anti-Christ, the Man of Sin of II Thessalonians 2, and a Beast of Revelation 13.

Historicists generally agree Revelation 9 speaks of Muslims afflicting Christendom.

Partial Preterist believe that all of Matt 24 and most of Revelation were fulfilled in AD70 and most uses of end refers to the end of the old covenant system not the world

They are postmillennialists believing Christ will reign over the earth, not from an literal and earthly throne, but through the gradual increase of the Gospel and its power to change lives.

Full Preterist believe that all prophecy and all of Matt 24 and Revelation and every use of the end was fulfilled in AD70

Preterists' beliefs usually have a close association with **Amillennialism**,

That teaches Christ's reign during a non literal millennium is spiritual in nature, at the end of the church age, Christ will return in final judgment and establish a permanent reign in the new heaven and new earth.

- Does it really matter?
- Is there only one right view?
- I don't necessarily fully believe in any of those views I'd rather engage God daily

- **If we let any theological view shape our interpretation we will not be able to receive revelation directly face to face from God without leaning to our understanding to frame it**
- We need to let the bible interpret itself and allow the Holy Spirit lead us to all Truth which is a person Jesus
- Religion and theology want to tie everything up systematically and remove all the mystery of intimacy
- We need a day to day intimate relationship with God that enables us to fulfil our destiny one day at a time

Matt 24:3 “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Jesus answered the disciples questions

Jesus used the **end** to refer to the **end of the old covenant age** and of that generation

This was the transitional generation where the old was made obsolete until it finally faded away in AD70

There was a 40-year transition period where the O.C. was finished as far as God was concerned at the cross, though the religious people continued to practice it.

Heb 8:13 When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

- Look at some examples of **the end** when referring to **the end of old** rather than the end of the world in Matt 24

Matt 24:8 But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

Matt 24:12 Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Matt 24:14 This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Pentecost Act 2:5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.

Context and symbolism is of the end of the old and beginning of the new age not the end of the world

- **The parables within chapters Matt 21-25 are relating to the end of the old covenant system where the kingdom was being removed and the temple destroyed etc.**
- **In this context Jesus is warning of the consequences not of “hell” but of the destruction of Jerusalem**
- **The consequences of following the self-righteous DIY path and not Jesus**

Matt 24:15 “Therefore when you see the abomination of **desolation** which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand,)

Luke 21:20 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her **desolation** is near. 22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.

Matt 24:16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. 17 Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. 18 Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

Matt 24:20 But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. 22 Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

- **Matt 24 & 25 gets its symbolism from Dan 7**

Dan 7:13 “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. 14 “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

Dan 7:27 Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.

➔ **Context and symbolism is of end of the old and beginning of the new**

Matt 25:31 “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

Matt 25:34 “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’

Matt 25:41 “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels 45 Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to

one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

What is the Jesus meaning it was not literal but figurative?

- **The sheep and goat were nations not individuals**

What was the cause of the separation? Good works or no good works

Separation can't be relating to salvation as it as a results of works here, not grace and faith

This is not describing a corporate judgment where entire nations themselves are sent to heaven or hell in the future

It is not about the last generation of nations where people are to be judged based on how they treated the Jews (or Christians depending on what version you have heard)

- Jesus said it would happen in that generation
 - **This great tribulation is not in our future but in our past**
 - It is not about nations being judged based on works as that would mean there are two ways of salvation good works and grace and faith
 - It makes more sense if this was speaking of the religious unbelieving Jews who instead of serving the least of these "my brethren" the believing Jews, they were killing them and imprisoning them instead.
 - They continued to persecute the early church throughout that generation
- ➔ **Separation of the sheep and goats actually took place in A70 when the believers left Jerusalem as Jesus warned them to**
- ➔ Hundreds of thousand of the goats nation ended up literally in the fires of Gehenna

Next time we will look at the real meaning of the words eternal fire and eternal punishment in their true context

The actual original Greek meaning will reveal that what seems obviously to mean "hell" is actually far from it

Religion has used "hell" to create a fear of God by creating an angry God

Religion has tried to scare people into a relationship with God then uses legalism and fear to keep them in line

Hell is design to provoke a fear of God to keep our distance

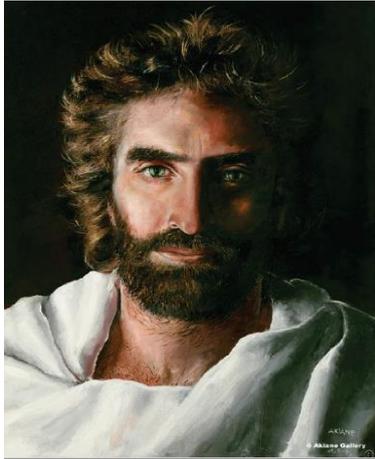
Lack of trust, fear of His discipline and fear of change and transformation results

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

1 John 4:8 ... for God is love.

Fear of every sort robs us of our righteousness peace and joy in Holy Spirit

Let's engage God as perfect love and let Him remove all fear from us



Close your eyes and begin to think of Jesus or Father being in front of you ask Him to reveal any areas of fear operating in your life
Hand all fear over to Him surrender to His love

Let the love of God surround you and drive out all fear
Let Jesus' healing power free your soul from fear
Let all fear be destroyed by the intense fire of God's love for you



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