

Module 05 – 31 Responsibility - New vs. Old – Hell 5

Session 31

We are going to finish looking at the subject of “hell” a concept that is inspired by the same deceiver who originally lied to Adam about God

The lie that God is angry and vengeful to be feared supports the traditional view of “hell” as a place for the eternal punishment for sinners

Excellent free resources on the topic of “hell”

Raising Hell <http://www.raisinghellbook.com/>

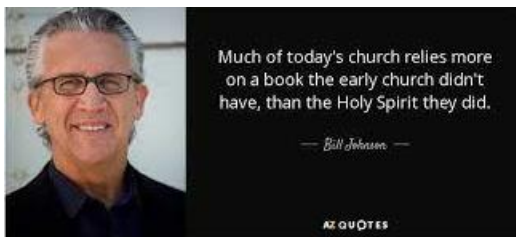
Brazen Church “Hell in a hand basket” <http://brazenchurch.com/hell-in-the-bible/>

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 wants us all to know Him personally and intimately so we can fully experience His character and nature which in essence is to know His love**
- **The wrong view of God being angry and vengeful has hindered people from knowing His love**

The word hell doesn't exist in the original language and the concept is derived from symbolic parables

- Jesus used parables directed towards the religious leaders and their followers to make points about the results of their DIY religious self-righteousness
- What I have been trying to do in these sessions is show that the majority of texts used to affirm the “hell” concept in the gospels are figuratively actually referring to the AD70 destruction of Jerusalem and the temple that Jesus predicted would finally end the obsolete old covenant system
- I have also tried to show that even the Greek words themselves used in these parables do not have to be translated in a way that validates the “hell” concept as punishment and torment delivered by God
- Words like eternal, punishment, torment, fire, judgment as used in the parables and other teachings are often mistranslated and don't have to relate to an angry God who punishes sinners forever

Sheep and goats parable

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 ... 46 These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'"

There is one phrase that is worth explaining from the parable of the sheep and goats - *Eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels* because this seems to indicate something beyond AD70

Eternal is age enduring and **fire** is for refining and purifying not punishing

The "fire prepared" was a description of the literal Gehenna and this was fulfilled in AD70 when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by a fire that endured figuratively until the old covenant finally ended

This fire was what Jesus said would come on that generation. Matt 23

Those who ignored Jesus' warnings actually ended up dead in Gehenna in the fire

How then could the devil and his angels end up in a physical Gehenna?

- It is a parable and is figurative not literal
- Jesus referred to the religious leaders as sons of the devil

John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies

The Greek words **devil** and **angels** can also have different meanings

diabolos – dia + ballo through the fall

properly, a slanderer; a false accuser; unjustly criticizing to hurt (malign) and condemn to sever a relationship. Malicious gossip, Backbiter to bring down

angelos messenger envoy can refer to "a human messenger" e.g. John the Baptist, as well as angelic messengers

Jesus said to Peter get behind me satan (accuser) this was figurative not literal meaning

The chief priest and his representatives would be seen as slandering the truth and persecuting believers therefore *diabolos*

His messengers would be the Pharisees and those who tried to reintroduce legalism into the church trying to get people back under the old law system

Even if this was referring to a literal devil and literal fallen angels it still does not mean a retributive punishment which is forever and everlasting

→ **If God desires the restoration of all things (Acts 3:20) does that not mean everything can be potentially restored?**

There are other parables and teachings to look at that have been used to validate the hell concept.

- Parable of Lazarus and the rich man
- God's retribution referred to by Paul
- Lake of Fire referred to by John in Revelation

The Parable of Lazarus & the Rich Man in Luke 16 seems to show a visual view of a possible afterlife of torment but it is in a parable form

- For an in depth look into this parable: Brad Jersak's analysis in Hell in a Handbasket by Brazen church is a great resource

What is the context of Luke 16

Luke 16:11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? 13 No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Luke 16:14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. 15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

Luke 16:19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendour every day. 20 And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 22 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. 23 In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' 31 But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus primary meaning is not about "hell"
The parable also represented what might have existed before the resurrection; it does not indicate the present day or a future day
God is not mentioned at all and He is certainly not inflicting any torment

Uncircumcised Gentile proselytes of Judaism were referred to as "gate proselytes" or "strangers inside the gate." They enjoyed certain rights and privileges under the Mosaic Law.

- The parable is condemning the rich man for leaving Lazarus outside when the Law obligated Jews to provide for foreigners inside
- In this parable Jesus is using a culturally accepted idea believed to be true by some traditions at the time

- Abraham's bosom is not a biblical phrase but a mythological or cultural one that came from something they picked up while in captivity in Babylon and is found in the Babylonian Talmud

Jesus borrows a cultural concept that refers to two places in Sheol (Hades) one for the righteous to await resurrection

Jesus referred to Paradise where the thief on the cross would be with Him that day after death

The other place was where the unrighteous awaited judgement

Jesus actually went into Hades (Sheol) and preached after His burial

The rich man is in Hades and desires to send a warning to his brothers before it is too late for them.

This obviously can't possibly happen after any final judgment in a place like the infernalist's typical view of the everlasting 'lake of fire' because a warning would be futile

Do we really think there is literal communication with literal Abraham across a literal chasm?

Does everyone there have a direct line to Abraham?

Do the millions in his care take turns snuggling up to him?

Is his bosom big enough to contain them all at once?

Are these literal flames?

Since hades precedes the resurrection of the body, did they have literal tongues with which to feel thirst?

Does someone being incinerated in a furnace really care about thirst?

→ **This is a parable not an allegory and it is not supposed to be taken literally**

Do we think that in heaven we will see our loved ones in "hell" and talk to them but offer them no hope, yet we are going to be happy with that?

Are we going to eternally see our parents or grandparents or children and then be filled with joy?

→ **No because it is not about "hell" at all!**

What is the point of the parable if not "hell"?

Jesus' is incorporating some contemporary Jewish imagery to make an ethical point. From the beginning of Luke 16, the immediate context of Jesus' discourse is the management of wealth, the idolatry of mammon and the perilous state of those who put their trust in riches and don't help the poor

A similar message is directed to the religious leaders and their followers in other parables and teachings

Good Samaritan – the religious people ignored the poor but a foreigner or outsider loved his neighbour

The invitation to the banquet (kingdom) was turned down by those caught up with their own worldly issues

- **Jesus shared many messages that addressed the ethics of worldly wealth.**
- **Jesus confronts those who are rich and powerful but abused their position**
- **The context of this story is Jesus talking to the Pharisees about trusting in and misusing mammon or wealth.**

Jesus was telling the Pharisees that just because they were natural descendants of Abraham that did not mean they were going to get the spiritual inheritance of the kingdom.

- **This is a parable about racial division and about the way that the rich treat the poor.**

The parable is not about heaven and hell and those words aren't even mentioned in these passages.

When Jesus tells them the story, He quite literally means that the rich and poor of that age would see a reversal of fortunes in the next.

Matt 16:26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Losing your soul for temporal gain is the cost of materialism and the results of DIY self-righteous life

Matt 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves 34 Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify,

Matt 23:34. "and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, 35 so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth... 36 Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

- That happened in AD70

If "hell" as eternal punishment was such an important concept why do Peter, Paul or John not mention it in their letters to the churches?

Paul does not mention "hell" even once

In 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 Paul does talk about retribution so what does he mean if he not referring to God's judgment on sinners in "hell"?

2 Thes 1:5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. 6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire

- **Figuratively AD70 and the end of the age**
- Those who were persecuting the believers were the unbelieving religious Jewish leaders they would reap what they sowed
- Jesus had already warned them that they would not be saved from the fire and destruction coming figuratively in AD70 which would bring relief to the believers who were being persecuted
- But that doesn't mean that this is vengeance

2 Thes 1:8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from (apo) the presence of the Lord and from (apo) the glory of His power,
Retribution, penalty, destruction

Penalty *dike* actually means justice or right, judicial hearing or a legal decision
Retribution *ekdikesis* means defence vindication "out of justice"
Destruction is not the same as punishment or torment and eternal is not forever or everlasting but age enduring

"destruction" – *Olethros* is most accurately translated here as the state of being lost.
"These will pay the penalty in the age (or eon) of loss away from (or from) the face of the Lord and from the glory of His strength."

ólethros (from *ollymi*) – properly, ruination with its full, destructive results ("ruination") however does not imply "extinction" (annihilation).
Rather it emphasizes the consequent loss that goes with this complete "undoing."

This same word *oletheros* is translated as both "perish" in John 3:16 and "lost" Luke 15:32,
Luke 15:32, But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not be lost, but have age enduring life."
Destruction is not the best interpretation, lost fits much better
There is also another way of viewing these verses

2 Thes 1:9 who will be incurring whole/ruining justice (that entirely ruins or dismantles) for an unknown passage of time from the presence or face of the master and from the strength of His glory (essence or essential nature of person place or things)

→ **God's consuming fire presence will deliver a justice that totally ruins their lost-ness**

- If you believe in the concept of "hell" the word "destruction" doesn't fit
- If you believe in the annihilation of the wicked, the combination of "eternal" and "destruction" "doesn't make any sense."

→ **This is not about some future end of the world event but what Jesus prophesied would occur in that generation and did in AD70 but even then God's justice is always restorative for everyone**

If there is any wrath or passion (*orge*) it must be an expression of love as God is love
If God is love then even His anger must be an expression of His love

What or who is God's anger, wrath or passion directed at?

- God's anger and wrath are his passionate response to anything in our lives that is robbing us of our true identity and our sonship relationship with Him
- Therefore God's anger and wrath are not directed towards any of His children,
- Therefore God's anger and wrath are directed towards our fallen mind-set inherited from Adam that causes death

Being face to face with Jesus means all darkness is shredded in His light.
Vengeance might as well be the same as salvation, mercy or justice - George McDonald

- God's wrath anger and vengeance are poured out on anything that is keeping us from a relationship with Him in face to face innocence and is an expression of His love

"Some recent theologians are of the opinion that the fire which both burns and saves is Christ himself, the Judge and Saviour. The encounter with him is the decisive act of judgement. Before his gaze all falsehood melts away.

This encounter with him, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves. All that we build during our lives can prove to be mere straw, pure bluster, and it collapses. Yet in the pain of this encounter, when the impurity and sickness of our lives become evident to us, there lies salvation.

His gaze, the touch of his heart heals us through an undeniably painful transformation "as through fire".

But it is a blessed pain, in which the holy power of his love sears through us like a flame, enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God.

In this way the inter-relation between justice and grace also becomes clear: the way we live our lives is not immaterial, but our defilement does not stain us for ever if we have at least continued to reach out towards Christ, towards truth and towards love. Indeed, it has already been burned away through Christ's Passion

At the moment of judgement we experience and we absorb the overwhelming power of his love over all the evil in the world and in ourselves.

The pain of love becomes our salvation and our joy. It is clear that we cannot calculate the "duration" of this transforming burning in terms of the chronological measurements of this world.

The transforming "moment" of this encounter eludes earthly time-reckoning—it is the heart's time, it is the time of "passage" to communion with God in the Body of Christ.

The judgement of God is hope, both because it is justice and because it is grace. If it were merely grace, making all earthly things cease to matter, God would still owe us an answer to the question about justice—the crucial question that we ask of history and of God.

If it were merely justice, in the end it could bring only fear to us all. The incarnation of God in Christ has so closely linked the two together—judgement and grace—that justice is firmly established: we all work out our salvation “with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12).

Nevertheless grace allows us all to hope, and to go trustfully to meet the Judge whom we know as our “advocate”, or *parakletos* (cf. 1 Jn 2:1)."

Spe Salvi. Pope Benedict

This applies to everyone; believers and not yet believers

The Lake of Fire

There are a total of five verses that mention “the Lake of Fire” in the bible. All of these scriptures are found in chapters 19 and 20 of the book of Revelation. Revelation is a unique book. It’s the only apocalyptic book included in the New Testament but very common in Jewish and Greek literature

- Apocalypticism is a type of literature that is very symbolic and cryptic in nature.
- Symbols are usually culturally developed and must be interpreted using that culture’s perspective or lens.
- **In other words, the book of Revelation CANNOT be read literally if we wish to understand it.**
- **Reading Revelation literally is the only way to be 100% confident you are interpreting it WRONGLY.**
- When Apocalyptic language is used in the Bible, it often correlates with mythological ideas that would have been prevalent when the book was written.

Some symbols in Revelation are found in the book of Daniel

In Daniel 7:11, we read, Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.

This is the same symbol of the lake of fire in Revelation 20:10,

Rev 19:20 and the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

Just as the beasts in Daniel were highly figurative, symbolically represented various nations, so too is the lake of burning sulphur figurative.

Only in a futurist view would take this one piece of the apocalyptic story as literal when everything else in the story is symbolic and figurative?

Book of Revelation is generally interpreted in either Futurist, Historicists, Partial-Preterist, Preterist ways which all have different times for the fulfilment of some or all of this book

Preterist view says that the “lake of fire” was fulfilled in AD70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the old covenant age

Rev 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- **Adam introduced the first death. Jesus conquered death and Hades at the second death**

Revelation was a warning to Israel that just as Sodom and Gomorrah fell, through fiery destruction, they were in danger of the Jewish legalistic system of ending in the same manner.

He was pointing to the past, in order to warn them that what happened in the past was a sign warning them of what would happen in their future

Jude verse 7, uses the illustration of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them, to warn the apostate Jews in his day.

In the NT era, there were still active fires and smoke around the dead sea according to Strabo, the first century geographer, who called it “a land of fires

The book of life mentioned was a commonly understood concept in the Jewish tradition and refers back to the law where according to the Talmud this book is opened every Jewish New Year on Rosh Hashanah

It does not refer to the future but would have been understood in its cultural AD70 context

Since Revelation is an extreme display of symbolism, the lake of fire could also represent multiple concepts.

In Revelation 20:14, we see Death and Hades thrown into the lake of fire.

This could very well mean that the lake of fire represents God’s triumph over evil, sin, the grave and death through the power of the cross

Rev 20:10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

What are the literal meanings of the words used?

Forever and ever is plural in the original Greek can’t be forever and evers so it ignored because it doesn’t fit the “hell” concept

Aionas ages of the *aionon* ages this means enduring for ages not forever without end

Brimstone Greek *theion* is the equivalent to divine incense, because burning brimstone was regarded as having power to purify, and to ward off contagion
Brimstone does not have to refer to destruction or punishment

The Greek word for “torment” is “*basanizo*” which has a primary meaning of testing with a touchstone.

The language used here creates an analogy to the testing metal with a touchstone in order to make sure it is pure.

This suggests that the lake of fire might not be for torment or destruction, but rather, for “testing” and refining.

***Basanizo* is also translated in other scriptures**

- Tossed or battered by waves
- Straining or toiling at the oars
- In labour and pained to give birth
- Torment is actually testing by fire for purification and refining not punishment

- It is difficult to make absolute conclusions about symbolic stories, which is why there are so many different views of eschatology.
- Some believe the lake of fire is the sun in our solar system.
- Others think it is the magma core of the earth.
- Others think it is not a literal place at all
- Others think it represents AD70 destruction of Jerusalem and the final physical end of the old covenant system
- **What we don't see is the conclusive idea that people will be tortured for eternity by God as an act of vengeance for rejecting Him.**

Others in church history... even many of the early church Fathers saw the lake of fire as a spiritual place where everyone in humanity was purged of their unbelief and sins so that they can eventually believe in God.

They teach that God is love. So when it says that God is a consuming fire, it must mean that is the fire of his love.

If the world is convinced by religion that we all deserve to be separated from God and punished then people will experience a sense of separation

They will have feelings that seem to validate the illusion that God is not connected and in relationship with us or that God has stopped loving us or has given up on us.

As a man thinks in his heart so is he
Many people live in this illusion now.

We need to change that wrong view


“hell” is not separation from Jesus but it is the pain of resisting our salvation in Jesus while not being able to escape Him who is True Love.”

Hell is the insanity of trying to escape the inescapable love of God. John Crowder

Let's give the world some real good news that God so loves them that Jesus came to remove their lostness and give them abundant life

- We can all experience the fire and passion of God's love today for ourselves don't hide from it or try to avoid it
- So it is time for everyone to embrace the fire to experience deeper love and the purification that My consuming fiery love brings

- Son call on Me to stoke the fires and increase the intensity of the heat to reveal hearts, minds and motives and to bring about a restoration of identity that will institute a deeper rest.

<p>I call for the purification of fire I call for the fire of love to penetrate the hardest darkest areas of our hearts I call for the refiners fire to burn away the dross of self I call for the light to shine to expose the things hidden because of shame</p>	<p>I call for love's overcoming power to reveal and break every chain tethering God's people to the DIY path. I call for the passion of God's heart to be revealed in His wrath directed towards all brokenness and lost identity. Let the consuming fire of God's love burn in our hearts and minds to restore us to true sonship</p>	
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<p>Close your eyes and begin to think of Jesus ask Him to take you into the fire of His presence Let the passionate fire of His love consume you Let the fire of love in His eyes penetrate deep into your soul</p>	<p>Let the passionate fire of His love surround you baptise you in fire Let the fire of His love consume everything that robs you hinders you or afflicts you Let the fire of God's love consume every bondage, chain or addiction All guilt, shame, condemnation or fear be consumed</p>	<p>Ask Jesus to take you to the river of fire Ask Him to take you to the Judgment seat or the altar and engage the Seraphim</p>
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