

## **AFTERLIFE TITLE**

Welcome back for the FINAL week of the afterlife series. My name is Chris Fluit I serve as Lead Pastor here at Redemption Church in the beautiful city of Plano AND I AM GLAD TO SHARE THE Word of God with you.

## **The Afterlife is a lot more than just Heaven & Hell**

The afterlife is a little more complicated than you might think.

We have been filling out an **AFTERLIFE TIMELINE 7**

I encourage you to check out our podcast and the sermon notes we have posted to our website. [www.redemptionplano.com](http://www.redemptionplano.com)

We will finish up this series today. Today we are going to talk about...

## **Hell**

This is a subject that is not preached often. Sometimes a sermon on hell can scare people. In the 1700s a famous sermon by Jonathan Edwards called “Sinners in the hands of an angry God” was so powerful that people held on to whatever was around them out of fear that they could fall into hell.

Hell can be a scary subject if you don’t have Jesus, or if you are ignorant to what scripture says about it.

What I bring you today is not intended to scare you but to educate you.

## **Saved from what?**

If you are not brand new to Christianity you have probably heard of “being saved.” You surely have heard that the blood of Jesus that was poured out on the cross of Calvary can save you (Matthew 26:28, Ephesians 1:7, Romans 5:9). You have heard that the name of Jesus is the only name that saves (Acts 4:12). You have heard sermons on the people in Acts 2 asking ‘what can they do (to be saved)’ and Peter telling them to Repent, be Baptized, & be filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38)

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.(NIV)

We are thankful to be saved by Jesus Christ... but have you ever wondered... what am I being saved from?

## **Saved from what?**

As important as it is to understand where you are saved to... heaven.. You need to know where you are saved from. Hell is what you are saved from..

Hell's description in 3 words. Fire, Darkness & Punishment.

- **FIRE**

- Fire and brimstone (Psalm 11:6, Revelation 14:10; 21:8,)(Sodom & Gomorrah as an example Genesis 19:24)
- Burning wind (Psalm 11:6)
- Fiery oven (Psalm 21:9)
- Unquenchable fire (Mark 9:44)
- Smoke of a great furnace (Revelation 9:2)
- Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14)
- Flame (Luke 16:24)

- **Darkness**

- Outer Darkness (Matthew 22:13)
- Darkness (Revelation 9:2)
- Bottomless pit (Revelation 9:2)

- **Punishment**

- Torment (Luke 16:23 & 24) (Revelation 14:11)
- No Rest (Revelation 14:11)
- Surrounded by sorrow (2 Samuel 22:6)

- Weeping & gnashing of teeth (Matthew 22:13)
- Everlasting destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
- The Worm dies not (Mark 9:44)

There are differing views on Hell. Some interpret hell as...

- A temporary place of suffering
- Painless Death & Darkness, No longer existing
- Annihilation. Your soul is destroyed & ceases to exist
- A place that is spiritual but not physical

I understand why someone might want to interpret hell to be this way. No loving person wants someone to experience fiery torment for an eternity... however...

From all the descriptions of Hell we read, something stands out.

### **Hell is physical & literal**

- Hell is not temporary. It is described as everlasting & eternal. Everyone will spend eternity somewhere... Heaven or Hell.
- Hell is not painless. The pain of Hell, according to Scripture, is worse than any pain you have ever experienced in life. No moment on Earth compares to a moment in Hell.

And the pain does not lessen over time. It is not something that eases up or that you can get used to...

- You are not destroyed and then cease to exist. You are on fire but you never burn up. You are in a continual state of being destroyed, but it never ends.
- Hell is physical. Everyone wants Heaven to be literal... and everyone wants Hell to be figurative. 2 weeks ago we talked about the 2 resurrections. Everyone that has ever lived will be resurrected. You cannot have a resurrection without a body... The people thrown into hell will have physical bodies.

People in hell will be wandering around in the darkness trying to escape the pain of the flame. Imagine a person on fire... Now imagine 10 people on fire... now imagine 100... now imagine 1000s... Try imagining millions... Try to imagine billions of people crying out for someone to save them with no hope. (We don't know how many billions of people will be in hell... Scripture says that Hell continues to enlarge itself (Isaiah 5:14)).

The story of the rich man & Lazarus from the mouth of Jesus (Luke 16). Now what can we get from this story you may ask. It is dangerous to get doctrine from parables... I would ask - Where did Jesus say this story was a parable? Usually Jesus would introduce His parables AS PARABLES. In Parables you usually do not name people – Jesus names Lazarus & Abraham in this story.

The rich man in hell cried out for Mercy. He pleaded for Lazarus to come and bring him one drop of water. He cried out for the briefest of reliefs. He wanted PHYSICAL relief but there was none to be given in Hell.

He pleaded that someone would rise from the dead to tell his family about the horror of hell. They need to know to never come to a place called Hell. The rich man was told that they already had access to the Word of God from the lips of prophets... If they don't have faith in that word then it doesn't matter if someone is raised from the dead...

By the way, we understand that the Jesus, who was speaking this, would be raised from the dead and many who heard Him speak these words would not believe.

Everyone in Hell wants to come tell you to not come there. The rich man in Hell wanted to live his life differently if he had the chance. The rich man wanted to be a preacher, an evangelist, a street missionary... His sermon. Hell is real! Don't come here!

**Hell is not funny**

People brag that they were born to raise hell. People have said that Hell has the best music. All the people that partied so well on Earth will be in Hell... We will go and have one hell of a party.

Don't you even laugh at that.

There is nothing you would ever want in Hell.

You have the free will to make your own decisions in life... What car you buy, what food you eat, your career, your relationships, what movie you will watch... you should take a moment every day to consider the eternal choice that God has given you the freedom to make. One day you will step foot in heaven or hell.

Hell is not funny. Hell is the worst.

## **Why did God create hell?**

This is an important theological question. The answer to this shapes the very character of God.

- Hell was not created as a place of judgement for those whose lives didn't measure up to God's law.
- Hell was not created for those who committed "the really bad sins."
- Hell was not created for those who chose the wrong religion.
- Hell was not created for people who did not love Jesus.

No don't get me wrong... People will end up in Hell who did not measure up to God's law, who committed awful unpalatable sin, who chose the wrong religion, who did not love Jesus... But Hell was not created for them.

Hell was created for satan & his angels/demons.

Hell was NOT created for mankind. Man was not created for Hell. It was never the plan of God for you to go to Hell.

Another way to look at Hell is that it is a place where God's presence & glory does not dwell. Remember that Heaven is God's dwelling. Hell is a place God does not dwell.

2 Thessalonians 1:9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power(NIV)

Satan and his angels made the choice that they did not want to be in God's presence anymore. They did not want any place in His Kingdom. So God actually gave them what they wanted. Hell is a place away from the presence of the Lord.

Hell was not created as a place where Satan would sit on a throne and reign.

- Satan will experience the same darkness.
- Satan will experience the same torment.
- Satan will experience the same fiery eternal destruction.
- Satan & his Angels will be thinking the same thoughts as the rich man. Hell is real don't come here!

People that go to Hell have lived a life that says.. I don't want God's presence or glory. Their life says I want to live away from His rule, reign, & Kingdom. God gives them what they want – *Hell is the only place that is not under the direct rule, reign, & Kingdom of God.*

Heaven is a place for those who choose God as their Father.

Hell is a place for those whose father is the devil. (Mathew 23:15, John 8:44)

## **Where do we go after we die?**

Last week we told you about the body falling to sleep in death and the soul of someone who is saved by Jesus being present with the Lord. Remember the souls of the martyr's in Revelation who were in the very presence of God already.

There is a holding place for the souls of them who enter the afterlife without their names written in the Lambs book of life.

Those that die with Christ are present with the Lord... But those that die without Christ...

Those that died without Christ... Wait a moment... that is the majority of human history. Adam died before Christ. As did Abraham, Isaac, Israel... The Old Testament believers died before Christ came!

## Sheol

In the Old Testament they spoke of SHEOL. Which is a versatile word used for grave, pit, or something more sinister. Sometimes it is used for a physical description of a grave, which has led some to interpret hell as the grave and ceasing to exist... but Sheol also means...

- subterranean world (an earth under the earth) (Isaiah 44:23 Ezekiel 26:20). (It is tied to hollowness in etymology)
- Tied to destruction (Job 26:6; Job 28:22 Proverbs 15:11).
- Shades & shadows (Job 26:5 Proverbs 2:18; Proverbs 21:16 Isaiah 14:9; Isaiah 26:14).

Sheol can be seen as the holding place of souls without Christ.

- It is not pleasant, but it is not the torment of the lake of fire.
- There is consciousness in Sheol – The Prophet Samuel was summoned from Sheol (1 Samuel 28:11-15) & when the evil Babylonian king descended Sheol was stirred (Isaiah 14:9).
- Sheol is not removed from God's dwelling. "Sheol is naked before God," says Job (Job 26:6). "If I make my bed in Sheol," says the Psalmist, "behold thou art there" (Psalm 139:8). The wrath of Yahweh burns unto the lowest Sheol (Deuteronomy 32:22).
- There seems to be compartments to Sheol where they are gathered among their people (Genesis 15:15; Genesis 25:8, 17; 49:33 Numbers 20:24, 28; Numbers 31:2 Deuteronomy 32:50; Deuteronomy 34:5). Jesus references "the bosom of Abraham" as one such compartment in Sheol (Luke 16:22)

Sheol is similar to the Greek idea of Hades and in the Septuagint (the Bible translated into Greek) the word Hades is used in place of Sheol.

Those that die without Christ, their body and soul are separated. The body goes into the ground awaiting God to resurrect it and the soul goes to Sheol/hades the holding place. These souls await God's judgment as they wait in Sheol.

But some of these souls were also awaiting a redeemer...

Job 19:25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.(NIV)

Job 19:26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;(NIV)

Jesus is always willing to step down into your situation. It is one of my favorite things to think about.

God stepped down from His throne, stepped down onto earth, Stepped down into human flesh, stepped down to one of the lower segments of society, stepped down into the punishment of the cross, stepped down into death, stepped down into a borrowed tomb... Jesus is willing to step down into your mess.

## **Jesus stepped down into Sheol**

When Jesus died on the cross His Spirit and His earthly body were parted. His body was laid in the tomb but His spirit descended into Sheol. Peter refers to this place as Prison...

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,(NIV)

1 Peter 3:19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison(NIV)

Jesus showed up to that dark place and led anyone out that would follow Him.

Imagine 2 moments...

- When they see Him...
- When death & sheol loses its hold...

18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.



Jesus does not want anyone to be in Hell. He descended into Sheol to rescue them.

Let Jesus Rescue you from Hell. Jesus has conquered Death & Hell... Let Him rescue you!

## **music**

We are about to enter into a time of prayer...

Last week we told you that Heaven, God's dwelling came to earth. God's presence would be closer than ever. Heaven changes locations... Death & Hell also changes locations...

Revelation 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.(NIV)

Sin & death, the things that separate us from the Lord will be thrown into the lake of fire, never to be seen again. We will never be separated from the Lord again.

I wanted to have an illustration at the end of this sermon...

Take an inventory of everyone in your direct sphere of influence. Your family and your friends. your coworkers, classmates, & acquaintances. If you know someone by name and see them at least once a month. Also in the age of social media connectivity – add anyone you communicate with weekly through text or social media. Let's call this our sphere of influence...

Of all the people in your sphere of influence, how many do you know are on their way to heaven?

The illustration I wanted to do was have you write a name on slip of paper for everyone that you fear is headed to hell or that you don't know they are going to heaven.

I didn't think we would have enough paper or time...

If you believe in heaven & hell then you should believe in Jesus enough to share the saving message with those in your sphere of influence.

Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.(NIV)

Jude 23 commands us to fearfully pull people from the fire.

Hell is real! Don't go there. Turn to Jesus.

These altars are open. You need to come pray.