



What is Final Judgement and Hell?

Matthew 25:31-46

#1687 February 7, 2009 pm

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Introduction -

- The theme and reality of blessing and curse has been revealed to us all throughout scripture. For the faithful, blessing. And for the unfaithful, curse.
 - From the OT all throughout the NT
 - Adam and Eve in the Garden - Genesis 2:15-17
- We see this clearly through the journey of Israel. The promise of blessing for those who were faithful to the One true God and the promise of cursing for those who turned to idols. Deuteronomy 30:11-20
- Those who were faithful were granted life in the promised land and those who were not were exiled.
- As we approach this doctrine of Final Judgment we should understand that this is a culmination of the theme and reality of the blessing and curse, the blessing of life in the promised land for the faithful and the curse of eternal punishment in exile, or hell.
- Now, concerning this Final Judgment there are some different approaches that people hold to as to how it will all play out.
- Tonight, we do not want to make an issue about those details. Rather, we want to press the areas that we know scripture reveals clearly.
- We know that all nations and peoples will be judged. We know that Christ is the judge and that believers have great cause to hope in this day, and those who do not believe have great cause to tremble.
- Ultimately, we want tonight's message to glorify God as this truth serves to instruct and sanctify the believer through the grace of God and also by the grace of God we want those who do not believe to see the hope offered in the Gospel and for their lives to be supernaturally transformed.

Read Matthew 25:31-46

I. Returning of the King (v.31)

- This is the focal point of it all - "He comes in His glory"
- Philippians 2:9-11 - The day has come for all to recognize Jesus as Lord and for the full glory of the Father to be on public display.
- You see, at the return of Christ, when He assumes the throne as King and Judge we will see the Father's perfect glory, justice fully revealed.

- And we should not be swayed to think any differently. Everything that follows in this passage is a picture of the Father's glory, justice and love.
- As this day of final judgment is the culmination of redemption and subjecting.
 - Redemption of the saints - Romans 8:18-23
 - Subjecting of the enemies - 1 Corinthians 15:20-28
- The righteous justice of God will be administered in all its fullness and purity on that day and His glory will echo throughout all of creation so that it is unmistakable that everyone and everything is aware of the great glory of our God.
 - Daniel 7:9-14
 - As believers come face to face with the one who spilled his blood for our redemption, the one whom we have trusted and hoped in for this very moment.
 - As NB come face to face with the one whose salvation they have rejected, the one whose sacrifice they ignored and in many cases mocked.
- Final Judgment will be a day of returning, a day where Jesus returns in all his glory to sit on the throne for all the world to see him as King and experience him as Judge, and in all of this the glory of God will be on full display.

Great Separation (v.32-33)

- This is an obvious separation into two distinct groups.
 - So this removes the notion of riding the fence or playing on both sides
 - There is not a third option.
- It is a harvest where the wheat will be gathered and chaff taken to be burned, where the weeds that have been growing along side of the wheat will be identified and separated, it will be a day where the genuine will be refined and the disingenuous will be exposed.
 - Matthew 3:12/Matthew 13:24-30/Malachi 4:1
- We will see an ultimate exposing of counterfeit faith from real faith through this separation.
- It is extremely important for us to understand the basis on which this separation takes place.
- This is identification and separation based on righteousness alone.
 - We have all sinned and fallen short of this standard, leaving us a goats, chaff and enemies of God. None of us are righteous.
 - The good news is what God has done for us in Jesus Christ - Romans 5:6-19
- Those who have truly been transformed by this Gospel will be identified as righteous because of Christ and their faith and new life in him will be evidence of his saving work, which makes them sheep, wheat or his children.
- Those who have attempted righteousness in any other way will be identified as goats, chaff and enemies.
- The righteous will take their place on the right and the unrighteous will take their place on the left and what happens next is both a glorious and terrifying reality.

Receiving of Inheritance (v.34-46)

- Not only is the separating based on righteousness, but the judgment and inheritance is as well.
- Scripture is clear that everyone, believers and NB will stand before King Jesus.
 - That is really where the comparison ends though, the experience from this point on will be quite different between those on the right and those on the left.
- As we await for our moment before Jesus we see in Revelation 20:11-15 that the books will be opened and judgment begins.
 - A book of remembrance - Malachi 3:16-18
 - The Lambs book of life - Revelation 20:12

- This moment for the believer is not one to dread, but rather one to be hopeful for. As the books are searched this will not be a judgment in the negative sense of the word.
 - John 5:24 - (make point from 2 Cor. 5:10/1 Cor. 3:10-14 - a healthy fear and cause for righteous living)
 - Our foundation is sure, while there will be rewards and different degrees of rewarding based on our lives, the rewards will not be our means of joy rather being in the presence of God will fulfill us.
- So, what happens to the believer here is a rewarding.
 - The book of remembrance reveals the good works in the life of the believer, not as the basis for our salvation but as the evidence of our salvation.
 - The sinful acts of the believer will not be brought against them on this day because Christ has taken our sins upon himself and clothed us in the white garments of his righteousness.
 - This is what Colossians speaks of - Colossians 2:11-15
 - Our sins will not speak against us on the day of judgment because through Christ our record of sin has been cancelled.
 - The debt has been paid in full!
- We see in Matthew 25:34 that through the righteousness of Christ the believer is granted their inheritance, which is the Kingdom of God.
- Now, once the rewarding and receiving of the Kingdom is complete for the believers the King's attention turns to the unbelieving and this is not a time of rewarding.
- The book of life is searched and none of the unbelieving are found and as the book of remembrance is opened it will be clear that righteousness will not be found in the unbelieving.
- This is because the unbelieving placed their trust and hope in things other than Christ. They attempted to fulfill the law on their own and now the law judges them.
- They have no advocate to speak on their behalf and their debt has not been cancelled and their inheritance is eternal life, but not in the Kingdom of God, but in hell.
- So, while the day of judgment for the believer is a day to anticipate with hope, the day of judgment for the non-believer will be a day of complete terror.
 - Jonathan Edward's quotes - pg. 14
- This hell is real and it is the inheritance that awaits all those who are unrepentant when Christ returns.
- And hell is something that we need to have a biblical grasp on and let it guide the way we speak of it, not our emotions.
 - An emotional approach to hell belittles God, waters down Christ's love for us and deceives those who do not believe.

Understanding Hell

- This is one of, if not the biggest hang-ups people have with Christianity.
 - Classic questions - "how can a loving and just God send people to hell?"
 - We assume here that hell is not just, but in reality it is and if God does not judge sin he is untrue to his character.
- And if we approach the doctrine of hell emotionally then our perception will be tragically skewed, which is what is happening in many evangelical circles today.
 - New Evangelical Evasion - Al Mohler article
 - The apologetic approach and its problems
- This makes it extremely important for us to understand what hell really is, and one way to approach that is to identify what it is not.

Hell is not purgatory -

- A place of temporary punishment for those who die in God's grace to pay for their forgivable sins and be purified so they can enter into eternity with God.
- The problem with purgatory is that it is not taught at all in scripture...
 - Hebrews 9:27/2 Thessalonians 1:5-12
- For the believer there is no need to pay for anything as Christ did that on the Cross, and those who do not believe, on the day of Christ's return their destination is fixed. There is no second chance, or mulligan.
- Not only that, purgatory completely negates Christ's atonement and degrades the beauty of the Gospel.
- It minimizes Christ's righteousness and his power to lead his people in lives of holiness now, since in purgatory it can be gained.
- It allows for our treasure to be here on earth and then in purgatory magically morph into someone who cares for and loves God's kingdom.
- It cheapens the Gospel to be an after thought instead of the central love and driving force in our lives.
- Make no mistake, purgatory is a lie from Satan. Upon death or Christ's return the chasm is fixed. Christ paid it all for believers and the age of grace and salvation for the non-believer has ended.

Hell is not annihilation -

- The belief that hell is not eternal punishment but rather an obliteration or complete destruction, a ceasing to exist.
- Again, the problem here is that scripture just does not teach this.
 - Revelation 14:9-11
- Annihilationists would agree with that up to a point and would say that it is all true for as long as it lasts but it does not last forever.
 - This seems to come from an emotional approach to scripture.
- But look closely at the Revelation passage and see if you find something other than eternal punishment explained here.
 - An eternal consumption of the full strength of God's wrath
 - An eternal, physical and spiritual torment inflicted upon the unbeliever
 - It continues and never ceases. This is no soul sleep.
- The punishment is severe because the offense is severe. The punishment is so great because the one who is sinned against is so great.
- Hell is neither purgatory or annihilation, but what it is must become clear to us.

Hell is -

- Final - (Hebrews 9:27)
- Eternal - (Revelation 14:9-11)
- Conscious (Revelation 14:9-11/Luke 16:19-31)
- Punishment - (2 Thessalonians 1:6)
- Painful - (Revelation 14:9-11)
- Physical/Spiritual - (John 5:28-29)
- God's unrestrained continuous wrath poured and drunk in. God is not absent from Hell, He is sovereign over Hell just as He is all things.
- And as terrible and horrifying a picture scripture paints of hell, our minds can not fathom the true terror it will be.
- And this is exactly the reality that we must embrace to understand the depth of God's love for us in what He did for us in Christ.
- Because when the Father turned away from his son on that Cross it was this wrath that he poured out on his son. This unrestrained wrath for our sins, and Jesus endured that wrath and endured that hell so we would not have to.

- And to embrace a hell that the bible does not teach is to cheapen the love displayed on the Cross on Calvary's hill.
- Hell reveals to us the great price that was paid on our behalf and shows us the weight of the Father's wrath that Jesus suffered.

Application –

- Understand it is the Gospel that changes our lives, not fear of hell.
- Understand how great an offense our sin is
 - Confess/hope in the promises of God
- Examine our own hearts according the Word
 - Psalm 26:1-2/Psalm 139:23-24
- Explain hell in its full reality when talking to non-believers, but do it in order to point them to Christ.
 - Turn or Burn Preachers
 - J.I. Packer - "Views of hell should never be discussed outside the frame of the Gospel. Why not? Because it is only in connection with the Gospel that Jesus and the New Testament writers speak of hell, and the biblical way of treating biblical themes is in their biblical connections as well as in their biblical substance. The Christian idea of hell is not a freestanding concept of pain for pain's sake."
 - Peter Toon - "The preaching and teaching of Jesus concerning Gehenna, darkness and damnation were in the context of His proclamation and exposition of the Kingdom of God, salvation, and eternal life, they were never proposed as independent topics for reflection and study."
- An encouragement for believers to actively engage the great commission.

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