

WHAT IS HELL?

PART 2 OF 2
"ABYSS" AND "LAKE OF FIRE"

Sat, 9/12/2009 at 5:00 ♥ Sun, 9/13/2009 at 8:15 & 10:45

Sermon Theme: "Hell" – you've heard the term, *maybe even used the term*, but **what is hell – according to God's Holy Word?**

Introduction: Dear friends, what is going on RIGHT NOW in your body? ✦ Are you beginning to develop an infection? ✦ Are cancer cells beginning to multiply? We never want bad news, *but if something bad IS going on*, it's best to know NOW so we can receive successful treatments.

Hell is also bad news; however, *for anyone on that path*, it's best to find out NOW *and receive God's rescue in Christ!*

LAST WEEK we focused on the words: ✦ *Gehenna* (OT) and *Hell* (NT) – *a place of garbage, death, and constant fire*; we also focused on the words: ✦ *Sheol* (OT) and *Hades* (NT) – *a deep place of torment, agony, and flames*. TODAY we turn our attention to two more names for *the place of great suffering*: ✦ the Abyss and ✦ the Lake of Fire.

1. **Abyss** (ἄβυσσος): An immeasurable depth, the underworld abode of the dead (Rom. 10:7); of demons (Luke 8:31); of the beast (Rev. 11:7) (Gingrich, Greek NT Lexicon, 1). Lenski wrote: **"In Revelation, 'the abyss' is always hell"** (567).

- a. Demons begged and pleaded with Jesus to avoid the abyss: ^{NAS} **Luke 8:31** “...they were entreating [begging] Him not to command them to depart into the **abyss**.” *And why such begging? The abyss is terrible, so they always want to avoid it!*
- b. Satan has been bound and thrown into the abyss: ^{NAS} **Revelation 20:1** “And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the **abyss** and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold of...Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the **abyss**, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed...”
- i. When was Satan bound? It happened when Jesus shouted His victory cry: *It is finished!*
- ii. What is happening now? Satan is working *through the beast:* ^{NAS} **Revelation 11:7** “And when [the two gospel witnesses] have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the **abyss** will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.” In other words, *right now: “The voice of the true [gospel] witnesses is heard ever less. The silencing succeeds more and more”* (Lenski, 343).
- iii. When will the period called “a thousand years” come to an end? *Basically, when Jesus’ returns!* The Bible says that Satan “**must be released for a short time** (Rev. 20:4),” but Lenski explains: “**Merely long enough to permit Satan to gather his host and to have the fire out of the heaven devour them”** (577).

2. **Lake of Fire** (λίμνην τοῦ πυρός): The place of *final* punishment (Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon). *Notice WHO will be thrown into the lake of fire:*
- a. The beast and the false prophet: ^{NAS} **Revelation 19:20** “And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet...; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.” Have you ever been in the middle of a large lake? *All you can see is water! The lake of fire is a place with no shore, no refuge, no way of escape, and it burns with brimstone; a place we avoid only through Christ!*
 - b. The devil: ^{NAS} **Revelation 20:10** “And the devil who deceived [the nations] 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.” Though we – *as finite human beings* – cannot comprehend eternity, *the torment in the lake of fire will truly never cease!*
 - c. All whose names were NOT found written in the book of life: ^{NIV} **Revelation 20:15** “If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” That place is reserved for the enemies of God – “the devil and his angels” (Mt. 25:41) – but all human beings who reject God’s great rescue in Christ have also rejected God’s friendship, *thus will suffer with God’s enemies forevermore!* These verses give us more information about that suffering:
 - i. ^{NAS} **Psalm 11:6** “...Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.”
 - ii. ^{NAS} **Matthew 13:41** “[the angels] will gather out of His kingdom...those who commit lawlessness, ⁴²

and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

- iii. ^{NIV} **2 Thessalonians 1:9** “[those who do not know God (v. 8; Matthew 7:22-23)] will be punished with everlasting destruction...”
- iv. ^{NAS} **Matt. 25:46** “[the goats, the unbelievers] will go away into eternal punishment...”
- v. ^{NAS} **Revelation 14:11** “And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night...”

Conclusion: *But there is VERY good news:*

- ^{NAS} **1 Corinthians 15:56** “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- ^{NAS} **Romans 6:23** “...the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- ^{NAS} **1 Peter 3:18** “...Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God...”

Though we ALL deserve hell, *we have heaven in Christ!* And all God’s people said: *Amen!*

This Week’s Memory Verse: “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels’” (Matt. 25:41 NIV).

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Please share them with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers!

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