

Destiny of the Damned

by Glenn Meldrum

The sermon emphasizes the importance of revival and the consequences of sin, highlighting the need for Christians to remember their past and to be motivated to win others to Christ.

Scripture: Hebrews 10:31

Topics: "Revival", "Repentance"

Description

Glenn Meldrum preaches on the necessity of authentic revival, emphasizing the visible transformation of society through radical conversions as the true proof of revival. He highlights the passion awakened Christians have for the lost and the urgency to win souls for Christ. Meldrum stresses the importance of remembering our past sins and the emptiness without Christ to fuel our mission to reach the lost. He delves into the significance of law, conscience, and the moral standards set by God, underscoring the need for repentance and surrender to God's righteous laws.

Transcript

There is only one sure proof of revival--the visible transformation of secular society through vast numbers of radical conversions. Anything less is not authentic revival. Christians that have been genuinely awakened will never remain passionless about those who will spend an eternity in hell. Awakened saints will have a fire burning in their bones to win a dying culture to Christ. That is why a revived church will always be a soul winning church. H. Elvet Lewis, speaking on the 1904 Welsh Revival, gave the reason why the Gospel spread with such force, "Men who were before professing Christians were now evangelists, and men who had notorious fame hitherto as the curse of their homes, returned as missionaries" (Roberts, Glory, 79).

An immense number of Christians are not reaching the lost because they have forgotten what it was like to live without Christ. We have forgotten the hurt and sorrow our self-destructive lifestyles heaped upon us. We have failed to remember the loneliness and torment that accompanied our search for significance. We have forced out of our minds the painful rejections we endured in our quest for love. We no longer recall the emptiness that drove our selfish pursuits for pleasure. Yes, we can even forget the grief we inflicted upon our friends and loved ones through our self-absorbed lives. Tragically, we have forgotten the misery and sorrow that presently consumes every person that does not know Jesus as Savior.

Oh, how we need to sit at the feet of the Master until we remember what we were saved from and what we are saved to accomplish. Paul told us to "remember that at that time you were separate from Christ . . .

without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Hurting people are waiting for us to remember. Until that time, they suffer under their cruel bondage to sin. The Spirit is longing to make His appeal through us to those who do not know the bountiful love of Christ. The purpose of this chapter is to make plain to our hearts and minds the actual destiny of those rushing to damnation. May God "enlighten the eyes of our hearts" so that we would always live in the light of such truth. It is time to remember!

LAW AND CONSCIENCE

The Sovereign Lord gave humanity the gift of a free will and an active conscience. With these gifts comes the responsibility of their proper use. Free will grants individuals the right to choose between right and wrong. The conscience is the faculty for recognizing right and wrong. The problem with our free will and conscience lies in the fact that every human being possesses a sinful nature that is predisposed to rebellion against the Creator. This predisposition towards sin causes us to abuse these precious gifts of a free will and conscience.

To aid us in responsibly using these gifts, God gave us the Ten Commandments and the other moral laws expressed in both the Old and New Testaments. These commandments were given to be the moral and spiritual standards by which all of humanity is called to live. They are rules for right living in the sight of God and with one another. What individuals do with their free will, conscience and the divine moral law will either accuse or defend them before the Righteous Judge (Rom. 2:15).

Rejection of God's laws changes right and wrong into a subjective, relativistic morality. Morality is then socially engineered, reducing right and wrong to the whims of an individual or society. This gives way to a pragmatic, humanistic approach to ethics that is based upon cause and effect, or whatever works at any given time. To reject God's decrees is deliberate rebellion against the eternal Lawgiver. It is an act of self-exaltation against the Creator that makes the individual god. This self-idolatry breaks the first of the Ten Commandments--"You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3).

The heart of an individual or society grows hard when they reject their Creator and His commandments. This deadens the conscience to right and wrong. What was once morally intolerable becomes acceptable, even to the point of propagating moral deviance. However, the truth is never arbitrary, changeable or pragmatic. So what happens when we break these God-given commands and violate the gifts of a free will and conscience? We become guilty before the Lawgiver as lawbreakers. Elevate God's righteous law and you restore divine power to expose sin and convict the sinner. This is the non-Christian's only hope to escape God's righteous wrath.

The law and the Holy Spirit work hand in hand in saving sinners. The law reveals the Lord's holy standards that have been broken, and the Spirit drives the truth home to the conscience. The law is good and it is the goodness of God that exposes our sin. Jonathan Edwards wrote that men have to be so dealt with that ". . . their conscience stares them in the face and they begin to see their need" (Iain Murray, 129). Finney asserted, "The law does its work--annihilates the sinner's self-righteousness and shows him that mercy is his only hope. Then, he should be made to understand that it is morally impossible for a just God not to execute a penalty when the law has been broken" (Finney, Power, 69).

THEY ARE LOST

The life of Christ was divine love in action. "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Mt. 9:36). The Good Shepherd

came to rescue the lost sheep wandering aimlessly through life in spiritual blindness, even though many thought they could see. He will leave the ninety-nine obedient sheep to pursue a wandering lamb that strayed through willful rebellion (Mt. 18:12-14). Great joy fills the Good Shepherd's heart as each wandering soul is rescued from their self-destructive estrangement from the Savior.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32) a young man lived a life of self-determined rebellion against his father. The father knew that the rebellion in the young man's heart would only grow if he stayed at home. Though it broke his heart, the father allowed his son to leave home though it was contrary to his will. He knew that the wages of sin would eventually catch up to the young man and hoped that they would drive his boy home before they destroyed him. This parable differs from the lost sheep in that the father did not pursue the son as the shepherd did the sheep. The prodigal knew the way home. The lost sheep did not. Great joy erupts when the prodigal returns home.

These parables reveal two different kinds of unsaved people: those who have never served the Lord and those who have willfully turned their backs on Him. Regardless of the circumstances, anyone who does not know Jesus as Lord and Savior is at war with Him.

REALITIES OF THE UNSAVED

The Scriptures paint a terrifying picture of the eternal state of unrepentant sinners--they are destined for damnation. Below are six Biblical realities regarding their spiritual condition.

1. Every Person Is A Sinner

The Bible clearly teaches that sin is universal. It touches every individual whether he is a believer or not. The apostle John, writing to Christians, told us that those who contend that they do not sin are in essence accusing God of being a liar (1 Jn. 1:10). After King David repented of his adulterous affair with Bathsheba he confessed, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Ps. 51:5). King Solomon, David's son, wrote, "There is not a just man upon the face of the earth that does good and never sins" (Ecc.7:20). Non-Christians are willful sinners who obstinately continue their practice of sin. Though Christians sin, they have stopped its practice.

Sin is both destructive and deceptive. It literally puts the sinner at war with God. Sin in its very nature blinds the sinner to the depths of his rebellion so he thinks himself exempt from any danger before his Maker. Some think that their sin is not a real issue with Jehovah, that He does not see, or does not care. Many even erroneously believe that there is no such thing as sin. Such attitudes flow out of rebellious hearts that say, "The LORD does not see; the God of Jacob pays no heed" (Ps. 94:7). Nonetheless, sin is direct, purposeful rebellion against Christ and the laws that govern His kingdom. Since God's laws are founded upon His holy character, sin becomes an offense against His person, an enormous crime far beyond what we can fathom.

The sin of idolatry is a crime that every non-Christian commits. Because they refuse to worship the true and living God, they create through their own imaginations a god that thinks and acts just like them. Their manmade god condones their lifestyles and is undisturbed by their immoral acts. In spite of their beliefs, the Lord remains the same; He is not like sinful man. "These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought I was altogether like you. But I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face" (Ps. 50:21).

2. Sin As A Disease

All of humanity suffers under the curse of sin and the resulting judgment. In Jewish thought, the disease of leprosy was far more than just a physical affliction; it was a judgment against a rebellious sinner. Leprosy symbolized the destructive force of sin and the consequences that follow (Lev. 13:45-46).

Lepers were expelled from the community to live in garments of mourning until they were healed. Because certain types of diseases classified as leprosy were contagious, lepers were cast out of the populace for the protection of the community. This signified that they were lost, outside of the commonwealth of faith, damned. They had to cry, "unclean, unclean" to warn others of their devastating disease so the plague would not spread. It was a miserable existence of weeping, gnashing of teeth and the utter darkness of despair. Such is the reality of sin. It always produces sorrow and will do so throughout eternity.

We read in Matthew's Gospel of a leper who cried out to Jesus, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately he was cured of his leprosy" (Mt. 8:2-4). Jesus accomplished more than just healing the leper's body; He restored the man's relationship with God and with the community of faith. The Savior is always willing to heal those who suffer spiritual leprosy when they acknowledge their sin and cry, "Lord, make me clean."

Scripture employs the analogy of sin as a disease to illustrate its destructiveness in this life. However, the eternal ramifications of sin make it far more devastating than any physical disease. If sin was merely a hereditary disease then humanity would not be judged for it. However, sin is a willful choice, not a genetic disorder. "Before any sin can be enacted, it must be willed by some free personal agent, for that which is not willed is not sin" (Oden, 90).

3. Sin Is Rebellion Against God

During the years of Isaiah the prophet, Israel and Judah rebelled against Jehovah. Throughout his lifetime, the only ruler who walked with the Lord was Hezekiah. Listen to the prophet's opening oracle:

Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness--only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil. Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire; your fields are being stripped by foreigners right before you, laid waste as when overthrown by strangers. . . . Unless the LORD Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah (Isa. 1:2-8).

This prophecy illustrates that a dumb ox can have greater awareness of who its master is than a man. Israel's rebellion was manifested through their lifestyles. "But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts; they have turned aside and gone away" (Jer. 5:23). Their sin multiplied in the breeding ground of unrepentant hearts.

In addition, they refused to accept responsibility for their sinful lifestyles. The prophet described their self-destructive rebellion in light of a flesh consuming disease, "only wounds and welts and open sores." Their sin placed them outside of God's salvation. Sin had become so ingrained into the lifestyles of the people that if justice was executed they would have been utterly destroyed as was Sodom and Gomorrah.

The sinner's revolt against the Creator is unmistakably portrayed in his refusal to surrender his life to the Savior. Such an act is nothing less than insurrection against the Almighty and is the work of a God-hater. (Isa. 63:10). All who refuse to bow to the lordship of Christ will in turn rebel against the laws of His kingdom. Thus it follows that such persons after refusing to submit to the Sovereign Lord on earth would never want to go to heaven where His lordship is fully revealed.

4. Sin Is Wicked Before God

Many believe the lie that a holy God will not demand and enforce His righteous laws. Such a belief degrades His holy nature by making Him a lawbreaker like us. The Lord of Righteousness punishes wickedness because it is unequivocally antagonistic to His character and the laws of His kingdom. The prophet Samuel rebuked King Saul proclaiming: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." (1 Sam. 15:23a; NKJV). Sin, in all of its various forms, is rebellion against the Almighty!

Multitudes consider themselves to be morally good people. They say, "We're not that bad," or "not as bad as others." Such statements reveal a personal knowledge of sin but a refusal to accept responsibility for it. Sin remains exceedingly wicked regardless of our opinions. Our guilt is blatantly obvious if we have the courage to open our eyes and see the reality that our transgressions lie deeply imbedded within our bosoms.

Humanity is predisposed to do evil, not inherently good, as some have claimed. Jesus stated the reality when He said, ". . . how can you who are evil say anything good?" (Mt. 12:34a). No matter how many good deeds a person has done, sin always defiles the person and makes him guilty as a lawbreaker. "Who can say, 'I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?'" (Pr. 20:9). Truly, no deed can be acceptable to God if the person is not first accepted by Him. This means that there is nothing an unsaved person can do that is good or pleasing to God. No matter how good a person may think himself to be, sin still defiles him and places him at war with the Lord of Hosts. This war continues until the rebellious sinner repents and surrenders his or her life to the King of kings.

Our transgressions are rooted deep within the heart. "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time" (Gen. 6:5). All sin comes from the heart, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. . . . For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt. 15:19; 12:34). Jeremiah stated, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9).

5. Unrepentant Sinners Hate God

All sin is anarchy against Christ's kingdom. They are selfish acts of lawlessness. Selfishness is what defines the lifestyle of every unbeliever. Even when they perform benevolent acts, selfishness remains thoroughly entrenched in their hearts. Selfishness is rooted in their voluntary rejection of God and His laws. The Righteous Judge accuses the sinner, not for his nature, but for his willful acts that are contrary to God's moral standards.

Worse than the fact that impenitent sinners are lawless, they are by nature God-haters. "Here I would like to establish that unrepentant sinners positively hate God. . . . Sinners manifest great pleasure in sin: it is the element in which they live and move" (Finney, Principles, 137). Jesus said, "If anyone loves me, he will

obey my teaching. . . He who does not love me will not obey my teaching" (Jn. 14:23-24). Love for the Savior is proved through surrender and obedience to Him, while hatred for Him is demonstrated through rebellion. The very fact that unbelievers refuse to obey the commandments of Christ and yield their lives to Him in unswerving devotion confirms the truth that they are God-haters. This hatred for God is manifested in one's love of self and sin. Actually, the unsaved love their sin more than anything else, including God, spouse, children and friends.

Sentimental feelings or faithful church attendance does not mean a person loves the Lord. Willful rebellion is hatred toward God whether or not the person goes to church or has been baptized. James plainly expounded on this truth when he told us that the love of this world is "hatred toward God" (Jam. 4:4). The sinner's refusal to yield to Christ's lordship and kingdom is no different than a terrorist's rebellion against a country. Both are in anarchy against a particular government, to the one it is the government of God, to the other the government of men.

6. The Sinner's Spiritual Father

John made the terrifying statement, "He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue (practice) to sin" (1 Jn. 3:8-9a). If a person practices sin he is NOT a child of God, but a child of the devil, whether or not he claims to be a Christian. Jesus rebuked the religious people of His day saying, "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn. 8:44). Examine the fruit and you will know the tree. Live in sin and your spiritual father is the devil.

GOD AS JUDGE

We champion the cause of justice, believing it to be a good thing in business, government and personal life. It angers us when politicians exempt themselves from the very laws they pass, or when businessmen use unjust means to increase their wealth. We believe in a judicial system that strives to execute justice, dispensing equitable penalties to the guilty while exonerating the innocent. Why then do we think God unjust when He executes justice in damning a soul to hell?

We want God to be just, but we want Him to judge according to our standards. However, only God judges perfectly. He alone is infinite in wisdom, perfect in justice and absolute in holiness. His judgments are not corrupted by political bias, news polls, circumstantial evidence or the decision of a jury. Absolute truth is the basis of His judgments. He makes no mistakes!

The righteous judgments of the Lord go beyond our actions to the intents of the heart. Since He possesses perfect knowledge of every person, He is able to judge according to truth and is fully justified when He judges (Ps. 51:4). Many have attempted to vindicate their actions by saying, "God understands." You bet He does! No excuses on judgment day--only truth. The hearts of men will be laid bare before the Living God. There will be no place to run, no place to hide and no attorneys to consult. "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

Everyone who does not know Jesus will be judged for his or her crimes against the Almighty. "Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (Heb. 9:27). This is not a game; eternity is at stake! "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the

sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10). The Lord of Hosts does not make idle threats.

We have no concept of what it means to stand before God's infinite righteous wrath. It will be a time of terror beyond comprehension. His holy presence will fill the ungodly with dread, "Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?'" (Rev. 6:15-17).

Eternal horror awaits those who have not known Christ. In anxious fright, they will stand before their Maker as the Book of Life is opened. "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books" (Rev. 20:12). Those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will be thrown into the eternal lake of fire.

When a person repents of his sin and surrenders his life to Jesus, his name is written in the Book of Life. The only way to guarantee his name will never be blotted out of the Book is to faithfully serve the Savior until his dying day (Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5). The wisest thing a man can do is to make sure his name gets in that book, and stays in that book. The most agonizing words anyone could ever hear would be, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41).

HELL

Life beyond the grave is no less real than the one in which we now live. The Lord has "set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end" (Ecc. 3:11). All of mankind longs for eternal life even though we struggle with its Biblical concept because human experience suggests that everything has a beginning and an end. This means we lack any point of reference to eternity, which in turn presents us with the tremendous difficulty of grasping its mysteries. The only sure revelation concerning eternity must then come from beyond ourselves. Thankfully, God has not left us alone. He has revealed to us the realities of life after death through His Word. Even so, the Bible only allows us to see these realities from a distance.

Everything Jesus taught came from an eternal perspective. He possessed the authority to speak about eternal realities because He created them. As the author of truth, everything He taught about heaven and hell was based upon absolute truth. When we examine His teaching we find that He spoke more about hell than about heaven. In fact, Jesus went to great lengths to warn humanity of the realities of hell. Love was the compelling force that moved Him to forewarn us about an everlasting judgment. It is interesting to note, that our positive thinking, non-confrontational, cultural Christianity would label Jesus as a pessimist and a hindrance to church growth.

Jesus made every effort to change the destiny of the damned. What then remains for those who choose to rebel against the Savior? Death! Both physical and eternal. The Scriptures teach, "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23a). The ungodly will not only experience physical death, but eternal death as well. "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). All who die without Christ will taste the never-ending agonies of the second death.

The crime of murder is particularly hideous, especially since mankind was created in God's image (Gen. 9:6). Ponder for a moment the feelings of a man who saw his son brutally murdered. Would the death penalty for the perpetrator and ten million dollars compensate him for the loss of his son? Of course not! Now consider the murder of God's own Son. What punishment would be fitting for those who crucified the Redeemer? Not even an eternity in hell would be a just recompense for the most heinous crime ever committed. In fact, all of humanity throughout time stands personally guilty for murdering the Lamb of God.

Throughout the ages, men have attempted to discharge themselves of this damnable crime of crucifying the Messiah. The truth will be revealed when we stand before the Father. On that day, what excuse will we offer, how will we absolve ourselves? Will any defense be sufficient to justify our sin and grant us a right to heaven? Could baptism, church attendance or supposed good deeds cleanse such a wicked transgression? Absolutely NOT! Mankind has no remedy in himself for a sin so thoroughly horrendous. This is why Jesus died on the cross, to take upon Himself the punishment for our crimes against heaven so we could obtain mercy and forgiveness.

Now what if God turned a "blind eye" in some special cases and let a few of the "good" sinners into heaven? He would be neither just, nor good. The non-Biblical doctrines of purgatory and universalism (everybody goes to heaven) may seem nice after living a rebellious life, but they are damnable lies. Life in this world is the only preparation time we are given for eternity. When we pass through death's door it is too late to pray, too late to repent and too late to change the way we live. Furthermore, it is thoroughly illogical to think that people who rejected the Lord in this life would want to spend an eternity with Him. All who refuse to love and serve Him while on earth will never want to love and serve Him in heaven. Those who do not want to worship Him in this life will never want to sing His praises in those celestial halls. And everyone who does not want to live holy in this life will never want to do so in the next.

Hell was prepared for Satan and his fallen angels, not for humanity. Through mankind's willful rebellion against their Creator hell became the eternal habitation of all who reject Him. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9:17; KJV). Human imagination cannot fathom the pain and suffering of hell. John the Baptist called it a place of unquenchable fire. Jesus described it as "a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Mt.13:42). The wailing and gnashing of teeth refer to both their hatred of God and their eternal torments. Every resident of hell will only know despair and absolute loneliness. There will be none to comfort.

Jesus counseled us to, "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mk. 9:45-48; Mt. 10:28). There are no parties in hell or moments of joy; only weeping, gnashing of teeth, hopelessness and haunting memories. They will spend eternity remembering their willful rebellion. Forever they will REMEMBER.

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