

# God's Hell

by John Wagner

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*The sermon emphasizes the reality, reason, and representation of God's hell, highlighting the importance of understanding God's justice and hatred for sin.*

**Duration:** 43:55

**Scripture:** Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 25:46, Mark 11:15

**Topics:** "Eternal Punishment", "Divine Judgment"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the concept of eternal punishment in God's hell. He describes a scene where sinners are pleading for mercy but are ultimately cast into the lake of fire without regret. The preacher argues that love demands a hatred for evil and a punishment for it. He then directs the listeners to reflect on the crucifixion of Jesus, highlighting his suffering and abandonment by God. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the reality of God's hell and the need to consider its implications.

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## Transcript

My text this evening is found in the last verse of chapter 25, where the Lord Jesus Christ said these words, and these shall go away into everlasting punishment. In fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy, Jesus Christ makes his famous triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem riding on the back of a foal of an ass. He immediately makes his way into the temple where he finds that it has been transformed into a marketplace.

It is the time for the Passover where all Jews were commanded to appear at Jerusalem with a sacrifice. The religious leaders of the temple thought that they would perform a service for those who had traveled for many miles to this feast by providing them with all kinds of animals for the sacrifice. Of course, this would necessitate setting up a little banking business, a little store within the temple where the foreigner could come and exchange his currency for the local currency as well as provide change for those that might have needed it.

In other words, God's temple had been transformed into a money-making business. And you get a little glimpse of the greed of these religious leaders when you find that there were those who sold doves, recalling that the dove was the sacrifice for the poorest of the land. Because of his love for his father's house and because of his hatred for money-grubbing, covetous hypocrisy, Christ, for a second time in his ministry, went in and upended the tables of the moneychangers and those who dealt in selling sacrifices.

His father's house was to be called a house of prayer, but they had made it a den of thieves. That act of the Lord Jesus Christ drew forth an immediate response from the Pharisees, who demanded to know by what authority he did these things. Christ's answer takes us all the way through the rest of chapter 21 to the end of chapter 23, where Christ declares his final denunciation upon the Pharisees.

Behold, he says, your house is left unto you desolate. Those words especially caught the ears of some of his disciples. Peter, James, John, and Andrew, I believe, saw in them a reference to the destruction of the temple.

They knew the Lord Jesus Christ often spoke in cryptic language, and they got into the habit of, well, what's he meaning by that? What subtle meaning might there be behind his words? And possibly they saw that he had a reference to the destruction of the whole city. That thought was confirmed to them as Christ left the temple that day. As they were going out of the temple, the disciples remarked to the Lord Jesus Christ about the beauty of the temple and the greatness of the stones.

Christ replies that not one of those stones would be left upon another, indicating that there was coming for that temple an utter destruction. Those words moved Peter, James, John, and Andrew to go to Christ privately and to ask him just when these things would be and what would be the signs of his coming and of the end of the world. The answer to their questions is the Olivet Discourse, it's called, and is found in chapters of Matthew 24 and 25.

Not only do these chapters speak of the destruction of Jerusalem, but more importantly, speak of those days on the earth called the Great Tribulation. They speak of the deception that will take place in the last days, signs and wonders being done, so wonderful that if it were possible it would deceive the very elect of God. Christ speaks of the state of the visible church in those days just prior to his coming, and the Lord speaks of that day, that end that the disciples were so curious about.

He speaks of that day when he will separate the sheep from the goats, the true Christians from the counterfeit, for that is the emphasis of his words. Not just the saved from the lost, but those that give the appearance. I have to confess I never really understood that part of the gospel until I went to Northern Ireland and saw sheep and goats.

Our goats over here, the little nanny goats, look nothing like the goats over there. At a distance there is a similarity, and that's the whole point of it. The shepherd would be able to discern between the sheep and the goats, and here the Lord says the king, the king one day, at that end of all time, is going to have a great separation.

The sheep on his right hand and the goats will be upon his left. It is the end of those who are lost. It is the end of those who are going to be found on the left hand of the Lord Jesus Christ that must take our attention this evening.

Christ said of those that are to be found lost on judgment day, and these shall go away into everlasting punishment. From those words of Christ, I want to speak to you this evening on the subject of God's hell. God's hell.

First and foremost, I want you to consider the reality of God's hell. Christ's words in our text have a ring of divine certainty about them. These shall go away into everlasting punishment.

Hell is a real place. Men may laugh and they may make jokes about the existence of such a place as hell. Apostate religion may indeed attack this doctrine, but the doctrine of endless punishment, this doctrine that the lost will be suffering forever, is so solemn that man's natural instinct is either to ignore it, to not think about it whatsoever, or to deny it.

But God's word will stand the test of time and eternity and prove that all of these people are nothing more than liars and deceivers. Hell is real. As a matter of fact, the strongest support for the doctrine of hell is coming from the teaching of Jesus Christ himself.

Though this doctrine is plainly taught in Paul's epistles and other parts of scripture, nowhere do we find such detailed descriptions and emphasis in this doctrine as from the lips of Jesus Christ. It is true that Jesus Christ, during his earthly ministry, said more in his about heaven. That is true.

He has more to say about endless punishment than he does endless perfection. The most common word for hell in the New Testament is Gehenna. It's used twelve times.

Eleven of those occurrences come from the lips of Jesus Christ. The other occurrence is found in the book of James. The mere review of Christ's words when he was upon the earth, without reading any note or comment on them, will convince any unbiased mind that the Lord Jesus Christ was absolutely certain, convinced, that there was this place called hell of everlasting punishment.

Mark chapter 9, verses 43 to 44, the Lord said, And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off. That is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, well, whether or not you take it as a parable, it makes no difference.

If it is a parable, it's got backing up to things that are real. It came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Matthew 13, 41 and 42, The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Now, those are but a few verses of many found in the Gospels, those books that give the message of the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, that they speak of the awful reality of hell. After hearing these words from Christ's own mouth, is it possible to believe that He who gave these warnings about the destiny of the devils believed that it wasn't real? Or believe that there was going to come a time when there would be no wicked men or devils to punish, and therefore no need for eternal torment? Could you ever come away with that belief? Not for a moment.

Hell was real to Christ as heaven. But you know, men don't want to face the reality of hell. They don't want to think about hell, and they don't want to think about being held accountable to God for their actions.

Not only because they love sin, and they don't want to part with it, but because once they accept that they're held accountable to God for their actions, then they must accept the reality of God's punishment for sin. Hell is real. I come in the second place to the reason for God's hell.

Why is there a hell? Why has this glorious, merciful, loving, compassionate, tender, almighty God prepared a place called hell? Our text provides us with the answer. It's wound up in that word punishment. These shall go away into everlasting punishment.

There is a hell because there is an absolute necessity for punishment. Christ's teaching here is, if you put the words into its context, that because of the deeds, both of those committed and those omitted by these sinners, that there is a hell, and this group of people have to be punished because of their deeds. But what is it that necessitates such an awful place as hell? You see, men really don't want to hear about hell, and they want to make it the brunt of jokes.

They want to make the devil to be a little horned figure with a pitchfork because they don't want to hear that their sin one day is going to be punished in such a way that, I want to tell you, defies description. It defies description. And so they make statements to the effect, once the jokes are over and past and beyond, that something like, well, you know, God is such a God of love and mercy that He wouldn't punish somebody in hell forever.

But it is right there in such thinking that we see man's vast ignorance of God. We see the darkness that has settled upon his mind and his heart. We see there is a blindness to just who this God and what He is.

You see, the reason for the existence of hell is grounded in the very nature of God, who He is and what He is. Why does a man have like views of sin? Why does he think that his sin is not going to have such dire consequences as a punishment in this lake of fire? Why does he imagine that God's love and mercy will somehow look past his faults and God will wink and say, come on in, I'm so loving I can't send you to hell. I heard and I was raised in country music.

And there was one of these tear-jerking stories told, I think Loretta Lynn was the woman that sang it or Tammy Wynette, one of those two. How she had a dream one night that she went, stood before God on Judgment Day and she tells about that day and the books being opened up and she says at the end, I saw a tear come to his eye as he turned my soul away. I didn't know him yesterday and he knew me not today.

I thought how touching. I saw a tear come to his eye. I want to tell you there will be no tears in the eyes of God when he damns your soul to hell.

To think that simply reveals you have not seen the God of this Bible. Your eyes have not been opened up to the nature of this God, who and what He is. Man, sinful man, is ignorant.

Man doesn't understand what Habakkuk said when he wrote of God, God of pure eyes than to behold evil and can't not look upon iniquity. The lost sinners have no knowledge of the glistening purity of the absolute righteousness and of the glorious holiness of Jehovah. I never cease to remember in my own heart and mind that when Isaiah saw the Lord in chapter 6, of all of the attributes that he would have heard the angels sing about, what he heard was them flying down about the throne, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts.

That was the attribute, His holiness. They judge their sins. Let me get to center, friend.

You judge your sins in the light of your own standards. You compare your life to how others are. And perhaps you just think that you can go on and ignore and neglect and put aside and put off this God.

And I'm telling you, you don't know the Lord. Therefore, because you have no knowledge of His holiness, you imagine that your sins aren't really as wicked as they are. They aren't as stinking and rotten and filthy and dirty as you think, as they really are in the eyes of God.

In every act of sin, in every act of sin, we dethrone God and we put ourselves on the throne. The Puritan Thomas Shepard put it like this. He said, in every act of sin, this question is the issue.

Whose will shall be done? God's will or man's? Now, man, by sin, sets his own will above the Lord's and so kicks God as filth under his feet. Now, that's the kind of view I want to have of sin. It's a question whose will is going to be done.

The will that God has revealed in this book, or is it going to be my will? Every time I set my will above God's, it is kicking God as filth under your feet. Every sin is a rejection of God's rule over us. It is a sneering at Him.

It is a shaking of the fist in His face and a hurling of the dung of our sin at the Lord of glory. And yet somehow, somehow I know you sit there and you don't look at your sin like that. You don't look at it as doing nothing more than throwing dung in the face of God.

But the human heart is blinded by sin to the vile nature of sin itself, and that's because it is blind to God's holy nature. And this leads us to see that it is the very justice of God that demands this everlasting punishment. Not one of God's creatures can sin with impunity from divine justice.

There just are no exceptions, and the existence of hell is a solemn declaration of the inflexible nature of God's justice. God is saying, in essence, I don't bend my law. I will not tolerate sin to go unpunished.

I will not wink my eye. I will not pass over transgression. Sin must be punished.

God is love. Blessed be His name for that truth. But God is holy, and this God loves holiness.

This God loves purity. The only two emotions proper to God are love and wrath, love and wrath. Because this God loves purity, because He loves holiness wherever He finds it, He loves that.

He also hates iniquity and sin wherever He finds it. And His justice must ferret it out. His justice demands, I have got, there it is, I hate it.

And there is a satisfaction in God on this. It's not like our wrath and our blowing up. There is a satisfaction brought to the heart of God, if I can put it that way, when His holiness and His justice ends in wrath upon sin.

That's only right, isn't it? That's why there will be no tears in the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ when the souls will plead with Him, O Lord. You know, you've stood there. You just come with me.

You just come with me. There you are standing, and you're watching one after another after another. He is calling His angels, come, bind them hand and foot.

You watch that one go and be cast into the lake of fire. One after another they've fallen. They've been cast into hell.

Now you're up, sinner friend, you're up. And there you are pleading away. Oh Christ, have mercy.

I didn't mean it. I really didn't want to serve you. The tears are freely flowing, perhaps, because you see what's awaiting you.

The smoke is rising up. And you know in just a moment of time, you're going to be cast there. And you've pled with all your soul.

And the Lord simply says, bind them hand and foot. Cast them into the lake of fire. No regret.

There will be no one to pity you there that day. No one to shed a tear for you. God's people will rejoice that justice is being carried out.

You young people who know not the Lord, you listen to me. There will be no tears from your mom and dad on that day. Plenty of tears in this life.

They have pled with you. They have prayed for you to come, to come to Jesus Christ, to turn from your life of sin, to put your trust in Him. And you have laughed and spurned all their pleas.

But on that day, on that day, when the Lord says, bind them hand and foot, your mom and dad who have been redeemed are going to say, Amen. God's will be done. Everything changes that day.

How you look at things completely change that day. Love demands an absolute hatred for evil and a will and a purpose to punish it. The wages of sin is death.

Not just physical death as we've already seen. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. I will repay.

And my friends, if you want to see justice in its full light, let's back up to Calvary. Let's back up to the cross. And I want you, I want you to listen now.

Listen, listen and look. Listen to the eternal Son of God. I want you to see Him naked upon the tree.

I want you to see those Jews round about the cross, mocking Him. I want you to see His face all emaciated, beaten beyond recognition. I want you to see the blood-smeared Christ.

And I want you to hear Him say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And I want you to listen, because there was no answer. He is praying to His Father and there is no answer. For the first time throughout eternity, He has spoken to His Father and there's no answer.

Why? His Father had to forsake His Son. His Son was now bearing our sin in His own body on the tree. He now became guilty and God had to put Him through the equivalency of hell upon the cross.

And His Son did nothing wrong, simply for sin imputed to Him. He charged His Son with sin that He never committed. That's justice, my friends.

That tells me that God does not bend His law. Now then, why do men die and go to hell? Why will Christ one day reunite their soul with their body, a body that will never know decay ever again? Why will He cast both into the lake of fire? Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 1, verses 8 and 9, inflaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, who will not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. That gospel that I think and I know that many of you have heard from this pulpit, Lord's Day after Lord's Day after Lord's Day after Lord's Day, the gospel says, turn and live, repent and believe, come to Christ.

And if you go the rest of your days, however long that is, disobeying that gospel command to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you're going to find out the reason for hell. The law of God, as set down in those Ten Commandments, has been broken by us all. And the simple fact of the matter is that God Himself has said that eternal death is the penalty.

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Does it mean that only great sinners are going to be confined to the flames of hell? No. James said, he that is guilty in one point of breaking is guilty of all.

The Bible speaks, you know, of degrees of punishment in hell. It shall be more tolerable, the Lord said, for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you Pharisees. You may be in the eyes of others a very nice, respectable, clean living person.

You might have a good reputation of those with whom you work. But it is the law of God that you have to deal with. That will be the standard of judgment, and perfection is demanded.

Therefore, the reason for hell's very existence is the hatred of God for sin that must condemn the unbelieving, unrepentant sinner to hell. There is a price to pay, and God says you're going to pay it. I turn in the third place to the representation of hell.

These shall go away unto everlasting punishment. How is hell represented in the Bible? What picture does it give of this place of everlasting punishment? First, I find from my text, it is going to be a place of parting, a place of parting. These shall, note the words, go away.

Jesus Christ said there will come a separation of the sheep from the goats. There will be a parting of their ways. They may have dwelt together while on the earth.

They may have gone to the same church, sat under the same sermons, under the same preacher, heard the same invitations to come and to believe. They might have even sang in the same choir, perhaps sat side by side in the same pew. But on that day, Jesus Christ said they're going to be parted.

These shall go away. Away from friends, away from loved ones, away from the appeals of your minister to come to Christ, away from the prayers of God's people. Various times I've come to Greenville.

I've been in Orlando for 11 years, but at various times I've come here and I've sat in the prayer meetings and I've heard people weep for the lost in this church, unashamed to shed tears for those that know not the Lord. They tell you something, lost sinner, and you don't realize what a privilege is yours to be in a church where people are unashamed to pray for your lost soul. But on that day, you're going to go away from people like that.

Away from the Bible, away from peace, away from charity, away from hope, away from God, away from Christ. Not only is it a place of parting, but it is a place of indescribable pain. Now, you tell me, preacher, you're just trying to scare me.

You're dead right. You're dead right. You ought to be scared to death of hell.

I was 11 years old, sitting on the back row of a Baptist church. You want to know why I got myself to Christ that day? Because I was scared to death of going to hell. I knew it was real.

Scare you? Yeah. You want to know why the Lord Jesus Christ kept bringing it up again and again? Something you better fear. He told them.

Did he not? Don't fear the one that can kill your body, but fear the one who can cast your body and soul into hell. That's the one you should fear. Yes.

And all that I'm saying right now is designed to put fear into you about going to hell. It's a place of indescribable pain. Christ depicts hell as a place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched, as a furnace of fire.

It's referred to as the lake of fire and brimstone. We cited that scene from Luke 16. And in hell, he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off.

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. Just give me a little drop on the end of his finger. My throat is parched.

I'm in torment. So often the Lord said it's a place of weeping and wailing. Can you imagine what it would be like if we could open the lid off hell and hear the weeping and the wailing of the damned? It's real pain I can't describe.

I read about, you know, I read about those that have suffered third degree burns, put in special burn units. I read about the debridement, where they have to take away their dead flesh. I read about them groaning and crying and screaming because of the pain.

And then I think, little do men realize, I think the power and the depth of the wrath of God. Imagine every part of your body being on fire at the same time, so that every fiber of your being is feeling the intense torment of being burned. Imagine.

In Isaiah 30, hell is described as Topheth, the place where the idolatrous Jews sacrificed their children to the heathen god Molech by casting them onto this brazen image of this idol that had been heated to a white hot heat. Shrieks and cries were heard day and night from that place, as you can imagine. And those in hell will continually hear not only their own cries, but the weeping and the wailing of their companions for eternity.

It's a place of utter darkness, certainly. Jude speaks of hell as the blackness of darkness. Interesting turn of phrase.

The blackness of darkness. Imagine such darkness, not being able to see a ray of light. I have never to this day forgotten, as in the sixth grade, eleven years of age, traveling to the Luray caverns.

In those days, they had school groups come along and we were down in the lowest part of the cavern. At that point in time, they had a scene where they turned all the lights out. They don't do that anymore.

All the lights went out. Nothing. And I had my hand in front of my face like this, and I couldn't see my hand.

Pure blackness. No light. You know how uncomfortable you feel, do you not? Even when you're in a dimly lit room, perhaps a little bit of light coming in, but you wake up, it's blackness and you're out of place and it's awkward and you're not comfortable The light is on.

But imagine in hell, no light. Because the light of the world is gone. You've gone away from him.

Separation from Christ has to be utter darkness. And men love darkness rather than light. So you're getting what you've loved.

You're getting darkness. But in a way you can't imagine. It is the place of the wicked.

These shall go away. These. Satan and his angels will be in hell.

Wherever hell is, I don't know. But I know that the devil and his angels are going to be there. I also know in Revelation 21 verse 8, but the fearful and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.

Your companions of hell will be sodomites and lesbians and murderers and churchgoers and Sunday school teachers and preachers. These shall go away. The company that makes up hell, the damned, the wicked, it's moreover a place of unfailing memory.

Your memory will be alive and well. My sinner friend, wherever you are in this meeting tonight, if you are found that day and I am there at the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, I'm going to see you bound hand and foot. You're going to remember me.

And down in the pit of hell, you're going to remember every time your minister said, now is the time. Now is the day of salvation. You're going to remember.

You're going to remember your mom and your dad pleading with you and yes, perhaps arguing with you because they didn't want to see you go down to hell. You're going to remember all the opportunities you had. You see, you've got a long time to think about it.

Will that not be part of hell? Hell is the place of unsatisfied desires. You've desired your sin and you know what? It won't change. You're still going to desire it in hell, but you'll not be able to satisfy it.

If you're a fornicator now, you'll still be a fornicator, but you won't be able to satisfy your fornication. You like your drink now, you'll still want your drink, but you won't be able to satisfy it in hell. You want your good times and your pleasure, you'll still want them, but you won't have them.

Unsatisfied. Sadly, it is the place of perpetual damnation. As the Puritan Thomas Watson said, it is that word ever that breaks the heart.

Because if you could ever come to a time when even after a hundred thousand years you would know finally the door is open for me to leave, somehow it would make it more bearable. But it's everlasting punishment. All these things I've described never let up.

It's eternity. Oh my friends, it's forever and ever and ever and ever. What did the Puritan, how did he describe it? A bird flying from some distant planet, billions and billions of miles away, coming to this earth and taking a grain of sand, flying back and replacing this one grain at a time.

And he said eternity has just begun. When he's been done removing the earth, a grain of sand at a time. Now you tell me, my lost friend, is that where you want to spend eternity? There is no getting out.

There is no door out of hell. What was the writing over hell in Abaddon, the Greek mythology? The words were, Abandon hope, all ye who enter here. Abandon hope.

I think of the scene in Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan when Christian meets up with this man in the iron cage. He was a professor of religion at one time. He's now bound in this iron cage.

And Christian is curious about him. He said to the professor, said, well at one time there was great hopes for me. I was a flourishing professor.

But he set those things aside for the love and pleasure of this world. And Christian hears him say, eternity, eternity. How shall I grapple with the misery that I must meet with in eternity? You know what's good? I don't have to end there.

Because the text doesn't end there. Read it, would you please? These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous unto life eternal. The righteous, who are they? They were born sinners like you and I. They committed transgressions against the Lord.

They kicked Him as filth under their feet. But now they're righteous. And now they're going to be for all eternity with those of the Lord, purity, holiness, light, joy, peace, forever and ever and ever.

Because they're righteous. Well, how did they get that righteousness? You know, you know how they got it, don't you? God's only begotten Son entered this world, born of a virgin. This only begotten Son of God was sent into this world in human flesh that He might go to a place called Calvary.

That He might there bear the sins of many. That God might punish sin. Remember what I said? I said that God must punish sin.

Now, you see, either God's going to punish it in you in eternity forever, or He's going to punish it, or has punished it in Jesus Christ. Those are the only two options. And these righteous here, what have they done? They have simply come to Christ and said, I'm a sinner.

I'm all that preacher says I am and more. And I can't save myself. And I don't want to go to hell forever.

I want to live with Christ forever. I want this guilt and this sin and this misery done with. And they go to Jesus Christ.

And there the Lord of glory is offering that pardon here. Here it is. I'll forgive you.

I'll make you a new creature. I'll send those sins away and I'll blot them all out and they'll not be in my memory any longer. And I will give you my righteousness.

I will give you a perfection that will satisfy my Father. And on that day of judgment, you're going to find yourself at my right hand because you have my righteousness and you're going to live with me forever. That's good news.

Oh, you don't have to go to hell. Why will you die? Why? Why will you leave this meeting tonight? Why? You know you're lost. You know you're undone.

Why will you die? Oh, I'm having a good time. I'm enjoying life. And that Christianity is just going to mess my life up.

And all my friends and what will they say about me? Who cares? Who cares what they'll say? Hell is real. Maybe this will be the last time you'll hear my voice. Maybe this will be the last time you'll hear some

preacher say, now's the time.

One more time I ask you, will you come? Will you come tonight? I plead with you and the Lord pleads with you. All things are ready. The Lord read his word upon every heart for his namesake.

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