***Hell is Real  
  
RV189-01***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 14:9-11. Our subject is a very sober one: "The Destiny of Unbelievers."

A primary factor which is driving all events in human history is the question of: Who is God in the universe? Who is the Supreme Being? Who has the sovereign authority over all mankind? Who in the universe has the right to make the rules governing human relationships? Satan claims that he is the Supreme Being, and that he is the rightful ruler of the universe, and that God has been trying to usurp his rightful position for centuries. Isaiah 14:12-17 revealed this opinion of Satan, where Isaiah says, "How You have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn (speaking to the archangel Lucifer). You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations, but you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars of God.'" Satan said, "I'm going to go into God's throne," where he already was as God's honor guard: "I'm going to raise my throne above the stars of God (above all the angels of God). I will sit on the mount of the assembly. I will take the position of authority over all the rational creatures in the recesses of the North. I will descend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High."

That was his goal – to replace God. But Isaiah says, "Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit. Those who see you gaze at you. They will ponder over you saying, 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble? Who shook kingdoms? Who made the world like a wilderness, and overthrew its cities? Who did not allow his prisoners to go home?'" So, Isaiah almost makes a little fun of Satan. He says, "Yes, you're going to be a powerful person. You will have control of the nations. You'll bring great devastation. People will have great fear of you. And when they see you brought down, and it is proven that you are not the God of the universe, they're going to look at you with disbelief."

The New Agers (which is a covering for the old Hinduism) claim that each person is himself an evolving god. So, when they are asked, "Who is the God in the universe with authority?" They say, "Each of us is his own God." This was the view of the Roman emperors relative to themselves. They required that they be recognized by the citizens as deity. This will be the view of the future antichrist. This is the view, of course, of Mormons today – that they are evolving gods. And this is the view which has been popularized by people like Shirley MacLaine. Everyone is his own god.

Well, the sin nature in man simply does not want to admit that there is a Creator God whose laws are truth, and whose laws are enforceable by Him. The sin nature of man does not want to admit that there is someone out there who has charge of us. So, knowledgeable scientists promote the myth of evolution in order to escape the supernatural authority of the Creator. Psychotherapy denies the sinful nature of man in order to escape the need for a supernatural spiritual regeneration to solve the problems of the soul. Religious people seek spiritual truth through the subjectivism of their emotions and of their experiences in order to escape the objective statements of truth which are found in the Bible. This is exemplified by the whole charismatic movement.

Liberal theologians are forever reinterpreting the meaning, and questioning the reliability of Scripture by means of their own sin-distorted, human reason in order to escape the biblical fundamentalism of the Bible. The atheists simply say that there is no God at all. In Psalm 14:1, God calls them (people like Madalyn Murray O'Hair) fools. The human viewpoint arrogance of man knows no limitations on his smug self-confidence. So, he looks for truth within himself. But in the Bible, God clearly declares that He is the God of the universe; that He is in charge; that He will call the plays; that He does make the rules; and, that He will enforce His will by dint of the fact that He is the Creator God. In Exodus 20:3-6, within the code of the Ten Commandments, this was made clear to the Jewish people: "You shall have no other gods before Me" (that is, *besides* Me). You shall not make for yourselves an idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the sea. You will not make an image of an animal in the heavens; on the earth; or, under the sea, and say, 'This is my God. This represents God.' You shall not worship them or serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

Now, to make the mistake about who is God is not only self-destructive, but it is destructive to your posterity. To the third and fourth generation, God brings judgment upon your own posterity if you fail to realize who is God. All claims to deity among angels and men is a pure delusion. And God brings down to dust, sooner or later, those who claim to be divine. God's just wrath against the arrogance of worshiping false God's will, furthermore, be experienced forever. When God's wrath is thrust in judgment against those who claim to be deity, it will be there forever. And this is so pathetic, and men have no limitations of arrogance.

I remember, a couple of decades ago, there was a very prominent national religious leader, and he called himself "The Great I Am." You should break out in goosebumps, you would think, if you were a normal human being, to have that kind of audacious blasphemy to use a term that is declaring eternal existence. That's what "I am" means. The Hebrew word from which "I am" comes means "continually eternal existence." This man had the audacity to say, "I am the Great I Am." And he had an enormous following. And one day, he died; and "The Great I Am" became "The Great I Ain't," which is what always happens to great human deities. God is always there finally to crumble you down into the dust. And yet, people aren't going to stop it. They're going to still say, "I don't like to think that there is someone up there who's the boss. I want to be my own boss.

The all-time great usurpation of the role of deity will take place in the tribulation era. The antichrist will be the final great flame of being god. And all the world will be so impressed with his destiny that they will worship him, and it will be the final great insult to God.

**A Third Angel**

So, in Revelation 14:9-10, we have declared for us the doom of the worshipers of the antichrist: "And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice." "Another angel" refers to the fact that there were two other angels that have already made a pronouncement before this angel arrives on the scene. So, this is, in fact, the third angel following the previous two angels in verse 6 and verse 8. The first angel in verse 6 proclaimed the eternal gospel of the grace of salvation to escape God's judgment against sin. The second angel, in verse 8 of this chapter proclaimed the future fall of the Babylon system of false religion and of international government. Now, the third angel comes on the scene, and this one warns against the worship of the antichrist and of accepting his mark of ownership. This angel gives a blunt, clear statement of what awaits those who worship false gods; and, in this case, those who worship the false god of the antichrist. Those who refuse to worship the antichrist will not accept his external identifying mark.

We are told that the third angel speaks with a loud voice, indicating that all mankind will hear this particular warning: "Another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice." And we have the word "if." This is the Greek word "ei." It's a Greek particle, and those of you who have been around here a little bit immediately ask the question: what condition of the word "if" is this? What class of the word "if" is this? That is because all of you know that there are four classes of the word "if." It is very important to understand what the Bible is saying by knowing which class it is. This one is first class. Having said that to you, you already know that that means that the statement is true: "If anybody does this, and they are doing this – worshiping the unbelievers:" this is a statement of a fact.

**Worship**

"If anybody worships." This word "worship" is a standard word which is used for God in the New Testament. It is "proskuneo." This word means to bow before or someone as a superior being. This is to bow before the antichrist as God. The Greek grammar puts this in the present tense, which tells us that this is constantly being done by these people. And its active voice, which means that they choose to do this. They want to bow down before this man. It's indicative. It's a statement of a real fact. And they are bowing down in worship before what is called "the beast." This was the word "therion" that we've had before. "Therion" refers to the bestial qualities of the antichrist. He is the ruler at this time of a united world under a united world government. Everything that you see and hear taking place in the political realm of the nations today is headed for this. And here you are in the Bible reading about the end result when all the nations of the world finally indeed are interdependent.

Gorbachev made another speech this week in which he's telling the world that the world has come to the place where all the nations of the world are interdependent. He is becoming one of their prime spokesmen for the Bush New World Order of a world government, because this is the preparation for the final scene on earth – the final days of humanity before the Second Coming of Christ.

So, what these people are doing is falling down before the antichrist as their god, and they are worshiping him. Furthermore, they are worshiping also, it says, his "eikon" (his image). This refers to an idol of the antichrist which the false prophet (we previously have read) has made, and he has set it up in the middle of the tribulation in the Jews' temple in Jerusalem. At this point in time, the antichrist has moved his headquarters to Jerusalem, and in the holy of holies of the temple there then will stand this idol image of the antichrist. This will be the focus of the worship ritual of mankind. The antichrist will demand that people bow down before this image.

You can see how blasphemous and how insulting he is to God. First of all, as, we read earlier in Exodus 20, God told the Jewish people, "You'll have no other God beside Me because there isn't anyone. There is no other God, so don't get sidetracked. All others who claim to be God are false. It will be destructive to you if you do that. Remember that the Ten Commandments were given to preserve personal freedom. Nobody has personal freedom when you worship a false God.

Secondly, God said, "Don't even make an idol image to represent Me, and then worship Me through this image, through some ritual. That is destructive, because behind idol images always sits a demon spirit that operates that image. When you make an idol, there is always a demon spirit that goes with that idol. That's why God said, "Don't even make an idol of Me. Worship Me." How? In spirit, and in the truth of doctrine.

**Idolatry**

So, this antichrist is bold. He is so contemptuous of God. He thumbs his nose at God, and says, "First of all, I am God. Secondly, I am going to make an image of myself. And try to stop." Idolatry is a great insult to the Creator God, and the Bible makes it clear that it receives severe punishment. No greater example can be found than that of the Jewish people. The Jewish people, as you know, from the very first, crossed the Red Sea by a miracle of outstanding proportions, so that they knew that there was a living God out there who would performed this miracle, and carried them through that hazardous situation while the armies of Pharaoh were charging down on them. They hardly got a cross before they were asking Aaron to make an idol God that they could worship. And Aaron, their spiritual leader, is supposed to know better. You're supposed to, at least, be able to trust the spiritual leader, whatever his frailties may be – that he is going to point you in the right direction. But Aaron comes along and makes the golden calf, and then he points to it, and has the audacity to say, "Behold, 'Yahweh,' your God." He even called it "Jehovah, your God."

Idol worship is so obviously inane that it would seem that no rational person would do it. When you stop and think about what is involved in worshiping an idol, as David did on one occasion when he wrote Psalm 115. It struck him that this is inordinately inane. Who, in his rational, reasonable mind would think a chunk of metal or a piece of wood that you have formed into something is worth bowing down to? Well, people found that it worked, because they didn't understand that there was a demon behind it that was making it work for them. Thus, they were, in fact, worshiping Satan.

Psalm 115:1-8: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to You name give glory because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth." There are the two combinations in the Old Testament that we have so prominently on the New Testament. This word "lovingkindness" is our New Testament concept of "grace," and the "truth" there refers to the truth of "doctrine:" "Why should the nations say, 'Where now is their God (that is, the Jewish God)? But our God is in the heavens. He does whatever He pleases. He is sovereign. He is king. Their god (the idols) are silver and gold, the work of man's hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak. They have eyes, but they cannot see. They have ears, but they cannot hear. They have no noses, but they cannot smell. They their hands, but they cannot feel. They have feet, but they cannot walk. They cannot make a sound with their throat. Those who make them will become like them."

What is the word that describes an idol? Dumb. A dumb idol. And the psalmist says, "Those who worship those are going to become like them." What does that mean? Dumb. Everyone who trusts in them. But while it is astounding to us that people would do that, the truth of the matter is that large contingent of the human race to this day bow down before idol figures. Some of them, in the Eastern religions such as Shintoism, are worshiping ancestors. Yes, they do have images, but those images are representing the dead ancestors. What are they worshiping? They're also worshiping idols – the idols of their ancestors.

**The Mark**

So, John hears the angels say something about anyone who worships the antichrist and the idol image of himself, which he set up in the temple in Jerusalem, and who has indicated his loyalty to the antichrist by having received on his person a mark. Here is something that people willingly accepted. The Greek word for "mark" is "caragma." A "caragma" is a mark that's made by a stamp. You stamp something on that makes a mark. Or it could be engraved.

What he is referring to here is what people were willing to do that were described for us previously in Revelation 13:11-17. When the false prophet comes on the scene, he is associated with the antichrist. The antichrist has now turned against the world religion that has existed in the first three-and-a-half years. He destroys that harlot monstrous religion, probably based upon Roman Catholicism. Now he sets up his own religion, with his own false prophet as the high priest. And this high priest, verse 13 indicates, can perform miracles by the power of Satan as people perform miracles today by the power of Satan. And he sets up this image to be worshiped.

In verse 16, we read, "He causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, the freemen and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. This includes people from every socio-economic level and every position in society. The mark of the antichrist, beast, either on one's forehead or on the right hand, is clearly visible to everybody. It identifies those who are loyal to the antichrist, and those who worship him, and any who resist this mark are murdered. This mark will be required to engage in economic transactions of daily life just to survive. The mark is placed either on the forehead or the right man because those are prominent places which are easily visible and easily read.

Our technology today is rapidly moving toward the direction where it is easy to read marks. They now have a system that they are experimenting with that they hope to make nationwide, where a mark (a seal) can be put on a car, and when you drive through a tollgate, your account is automatically deducted. You are identified, and you drive through the toll gate, and the money comes out of your checking account. The money is charged to you in some way. You have to have an account set up. You have this seal, and you just drive through the tollgate, and the instrument reads it. It is being experimented with in order to be used in New York to cross the numerous rivers there, and to be able to collect more taxes by making everybody pay a toll to go across the rivers. It would pile up traffic if you had to stop and collect it, but this way, nobody stops. They just drive through, and the machine clicks off the information.

It will be easy to do business, by the time the tribulation comes, by simply reading a mark on a person's forehead or on his hand. Unbelievers will not be able to hide their loyalty to the antichrist. It will be like the Jewish people suffered under Nazi Germany. Whenever the Nazis took over a country, all the Jewish people were required to identify themselves by wearing a yellow star of David on their front and on their back so that everybody who saw this person immediately recognized this person as being a Jew, and treated him accordingly.

This mark will receive special treatment in the antichrist's kingdom. Those who do not have the mark, those who do not pledge loyalty to the antichrist, will be treated with contempt, and will have a very hard time. But when the worshipers of the antichrist seal their loyalty to him with this mark, they also have doomed themselves to the lake of fire. The Bible does not give us any indication that once a person takes the mark, that it can ever be removed. Once a person has made this move of commitment to loyalty to the antichrist, it is a permanent, irreversible commitment.

This will be, of course, the ultimate example of government control over the lives of the citizens, and there will be anybody then to stop the bureaucrats, because the government will have total control. Ultimately, however, a worse fate awaits those who accept the mark of the antichrist than those who refuse it. It will not be a very happy situation for believers in the antichrist kingdom. But whatever suffering they will experience will not be anything compared to what those who have taken the mark will experience once they have died.

**The Doom of Hell**

In Revelation 14:10, we have the doom of hell: "He also (the one who has taken this mask of this evil creature) will drink of the wine of the wrath of God." They will imbibe something that God will prepare for them. It is described as a wine, and this is a comparison to what we read in verse 8, which referred to the sweet wine of sexual immorality which was promoted by the antichrist's religion. They enjoyed drinking the sweet wine of illicit sex. Now comes the judgment of God for violating that moral rule of the Creator God who has the right to make the laws and to enforce them. Now it refers to the bitter wine of the wrath of God against this moral evil.

**God's Wrath**

The word "wrath" is the Greek word "thumos." "Thumos" is the Greek word that describes wrath in the sense of an outburst of indignation. We talk about people "flying off the handle." That's a "thumos" kind of wrath. Something happens – something triggers, and you explode. You've just had it as far as you're going to take it, and the wrath comes up.

**An Outburst of Indignation**

It's not just the fact that there's a steady burning indignation within you. It's just that something comes and triggers an explosion of indignation. This is what almighty God, who is a person of emotion, finally comes to as He sees Himself being ridiculed, and His law being violated. The time comes when now these who have pledged their loyalty to the antichrist, God explodes in this kind of wrath against them. It refers to His divine wrath against moral evil which the worshipers of the antichrist drink so readily.

This is very sad, because we must realize that, on Calvary, the Lord Jesus Christ drank the cup of God's wrath against the sin of all mankind. This is exactly the thing that Christ did for us. He drank to the dregs, to the bottom of the cup, the wrath of God for all of our sins. Tribulation unbelievers will have rejected this vicarious drinking of Christ, of the wrath of God for them. So, what happens? They end up drinking the wrath of God themselves. This is what happens to every person who rejects Jesus Christ as personal Savior. He ends up in eternity, drinking the wrath of God himself.

Furthermore, we need to understand how indignant God is at sin. Don't give us this: "God is so loving, and He is not going to send people to a terrible place of suffering; and, God's anger is not going to be expressed with all the power of dignity against those who are not covered by the blood of Christ." You're wrong. The wrath of God, this angel clarifies, is going to be unmixed in full strength. The word "unmixed" is the Greek word "kerannumi." "Kerannumi" means to mix two things together to form a third mixture. What this is telling us is that this is not going to be diluted by anything. God is not going to dilute His wrath by any grace. He's not going to dilute His wrath with any act of mercy. This is going to be wrath undiluted – full-strength.

It is interesting that this word is in the Greek perfect tense. The perfect tense always tells us that there is something here at the present that is happening, but it was prepared in the past. So, the wrath of God that is expressed here was established on the past condition of the fact that God has covered your sins. There is no reason for people to be acting this way. There is no reason for people to be ignoring the laws of God. There's no reason for people to continue in sin, because God has made a way of escape. That having been done in the past, God now acts upon that in the future.

This is also passive voice, which indicates that God does the mixing. You don't mix your own wrath. You get the result of what God's wrath has prepared for you. Furthermore, to make it very clear, the angel adds that it's going to come to you full-strength. It's not going to be diluted. It's going to be full strength. The Bible says that it's going to be "akratos." This word means "undiluted." There is no weakening of God's wrath for the worshipers of the antichrist. God's cup of wrath will be unmixed with grace and mercy. None of that will be there. Once the mark of the beast is accepted, the full impact of God's wrath is certain, and the time for salvation has passed.

So, those who worship the antichrist as God can expect the undiluted torment of God. They have mixed a bitter brew for themselves to drink. Those who bear the mark of the antichrist will be destroyed by Jesus Christ at His Second Coming.

So, they will find in this cup, full-strength, the undiluted wrath of God, in the cut of His anger.

**Steady Indignation**

Now, here's another word for "anger." We have learned about this "thumos" word for "anger," which is an outburst of indignation. Then comes a different word for "anger." This is "orge," and this is the steady state of indignation. This is the slow burn. This is the stated anger of God in indignation against violating His moral principles. It is no little thing to break the moral rules of God. It is no small thing to steal in a little way. It is no small thing to lie in a small way. It is no little thing to be just a little bit immoral sexually. It is a steady burning of divine wrath. What we don't understand is that God triggers that wrath at a certain point in time.

One of the great atheists of an early generation in the 20th century was once discussing in public the fact that there is no God. He said that that was nonsense, and he ridiculed God. One time, he finally stopped, and shook his hands, and said to his audience: "I'll show you what I mean." He shook his fist toward heaven, and said, "God, if you are there, you strike me dead right now. Now, let's put up, or shut up." Well, the people in that audience were sobered. That was scary stuff. And he didn't get struck down. And one man stood and said, "Sir, may I point out to you that God does not exercise His wrath until He is ready to do so?" And that's the point. God was indignant at what that man did. It was a steady burning of wrathful indignation on the part of a holy God against what this man did. But God didn't push the button until He was ready.

When that man died, those who stood by his bedside reported how he cried out in agony and in fear of what was happening to him, and the God that he feared was going to be out there, because now he knew the trigger was going to be pulled by this holy God on the wrath that had been burning all along – this "orge" wrath of God, a settled state of indignation.

**Torment**

God's holiness told me this is what causes this. God's holiness is always against sin. And the result for people who do this will be that they are going to be tormented ("bafanizo"). This word means to suffer great pain. I mean, this word (tormented) is personal agony. I mean, this is the kind of stuff that no amount of pain medication will help you. This is bad stuff, and it is no joke. What are we talking about? We're not talking about torture. You should not say that God tortures people in hell. That's an insult, because the word "torture" suggests that God is vindictive toward sinners, and He is getting even with them for what they did in disobeying Him. Use the right word. The word here is "torment," which means suffering unimaginable pain in hell as a result of what? It is as the result of the justice of God – the justice of God against unforgiven sin.

This is in the future tense because it's going to happen in the future. It is active. It is going to be personally experienced by these people. And it is a statement of great truth. The antichrist worshipers are going to be in physical pain. That pain will continue night and day forever.

When somebody talks about the fact they're not feeling well or they have a pain, I'm always uncomfortable when somebody says, "Oh, that's just in your head," or "Ah, that person is always complaining about not feeling well." I don't dismiss that. I have been there myself, and I know that when one is in physical pain, it is no joke. And if it goes unendingly, you can't sleep; you can't sit up; and, you can't lie down without pain. It is a grievous pain. It is a seriously trying thing, and I don't pass that off lightly. Can you imagine extending that out forever night and day? There is no relief.

The antichrist worshipers are going to be in physical pain day and night, and it will go on forever.

Now, people like to make jokes about being in hell, and they treat it as a grand reunion of old friends, but it will not be fun at all. Have you noticed that you don't feel like going to a party when you've got suffering physical pain? And you don't feel like going out to a big fun event when you're not feeling well? Well, I guarantee you that when you're sitting there in the pain of hell, everybody is going to be sitting there brooding about their own situation. They're not going to be sitting there chatting with each other. They're not going to be there having a good time. They know that tomorrow it's going to be the same way, and the next day, and the next day, and the next day.

Now, if that doesn't compel you and me to want to hand out an evangelism brochure; a tape catalog; and, an intro tape to a human being, I don't know what can motivate us to do that. The knowledge of what you can snatch a person from should be the motivation. That's what the Lord asked us to do.

**Hell for Unbelievers**

People do recoil from the biblical teaching about an eternal, fiery, painful suffering in hell. So, they try to dismiss it as unbecoming a loving God. When they do that, they become universalists, and the say that everybody's going to go to heaven. That's Phil Donahue's viewpoint. Or they become an annihilists, which is the viewpoint of Jehovah's Witnesses, that you're going to be rubbed out of existence as an unbeliever, so you won't suffer any pain. So, this is one way of escaping the biblical teaching on hell. But that still doesn't take it out of the Bible.

The better a person knows the essence of God, however, the easier it is to understand the inevitability and the propriety of hell for unbelievers. It is the holiness of God: His absolute righteousness; and, His perfect justice, which is what makes Him holy, that demands that there be judgment for unatoned sin – for sin which has not been paid for by the penalty of death. And if Jesus Christ is not accepted as the atonement for your sins, then you must face it yourself.

**Sin Must be Paid for**

Sin of the guilty must be paid for. That is the demand of a loving God. Only in a place like Los Angeles can one be guilty of a bit of a great evil of destruction, and then go scot-free, while at the same time the government scurries to make others pay for the consequences of your destructive sins. In God's order, the violators will bow before Him, and the penalty of using your volition inappropriately will be that you suffer the consequences.

**Fire and Brimstone**

What will the consequences be? What is the terrible full wrath of God that they will experience? They will be tormented with fire and brimstone. The word "fire" here simply means "flames." The word "brimstone" is this Greek word "theion." "Theion" is associated with burning sulfur. It is the odor that you notice around volcanic eruptions. We call it "rotten eggs." You can even stand on some places in Hawaii today, where there is active volcanic activity, and you notice this sulfur-burning odor. The Bible relates this to the condition of burning which is in hell. The burning and the brimstone concept is that it has an eating-away burning. It's like phosphorus.

Those of you who were in the military know about phosphorus grenades. Everybody was afraid of phosphorus grenades because phosphorus grenades explode, and they throw out little pellets of phosphorus which stick on the skin. And immediately, as they hit the air, they begin burning. They turn into fire, and they go right down into the skin. And nobody wants to be careless around a phosphorus grenade.

One time in the Marine Corps, in a training exercise, they have all of us sitting in the stands. We were brand new officers that they were training to be bold and courageous. An instructor was going to demonstrate a phosphorus grenade. He didn't tell us that he was going to set the scene with a smoke screen first. So, he pulled the pin, and threw this grenade out, and out came the smoke. And everybody in the stands thinks he just dropped a phosphorus grenade. I think it was in five-tenths of a second that that whole stand cleared. That was the first time I saw Marine officers who could fly, who had never been through flight training. And I was at the head of the column. And the instructor was hopping mad that we had reacted like that. But that's the way you would react if you thought that a phosphorus grenade was about to explode, and set all those pellets on you.

This is what is associated with the concept of this word "theion." It's something that sticks and burns. It's a phosphorus odor.

Mark Twain, when he visited Hawaii, observed the odor of sulfur around the volcanoes, and he joked about it, saying that: "It was not entirely an unpleasant odor to us sinners." Well, I think he's finding it most unpleasant now. It is a short-sighted, uninformed person who jokes about fire and brimstone.

**The Lake of Fire and Brimstone**

The Bible itself calls what we refer to as hell as the lake of fire and brimstone. Revelation 20:10: "And the devil who deceived them 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." That is a very clear declaration there of the fact that there is a place like hell. It is not just a symbol. It is not just something you imagine. It is a great reality. Here you have the fact that Satan ultimately is going to go to this place, because it was made by God for the devil and his angels, and human beings who decide to pledge their loyalty to Satan, as these who have taken the mark of the antichrist, will join him in that lake of fire and brimstone. 1,000 years before Satan arrives in the lake of fire and brimstone, the antichrist and his false prophets have already been placed there.

So, fire and brimstone are divine judgments. These are first combined for us in Genesis 19:24, where the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah for their homosexuality is described as God's destruction by the use of fire and brimstone upon those cities and the other cities of the plain. Of course, one of the things that people have ridiculed (one of the ways of trying to escape that Scripture that the homosexual community does) is to argue that there never was a place like Sodom, and there never was a place like Gomorrah. Well, you're going to find out better in the next session. The Word of God is always accurate, and it is always explicitly true.

**The Second Death**

The lake of fire is the place of the second death; that is, of eternal separation from one's Creator. Revelation 20:14: "And death and Hades." Hades is a temporary holding pen of those who are unbelievers who die. They don't go to the lake of fire now. They go to Hades, but eventually: "Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death." First was the physical death; and, now there is the second death – eternal spiritual death in the lake of fire, and eternal separation from one's Creator.

**Hell is Real**

Hell is clearly a biblical fact. While people want to deny that, and somehow escape it, it is a reality if the Word of God is true, and it is. Matthew 25:41: "Then He will say to those on his left (while Jesus is here after the Second Coming, judging the gentile nations), 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." There we have the statement that hell was prepared for Satan and for his demon followers.

Then back in Revelation 20:14-15, we read, "And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

These Scriptures are explicitly clear that there is an actual place like hell. And no greater authority could we call on than Christ Himself. The Hebrew term "Gehenna" was a term for "hell." It was used in the New Testament 12 times. Of those 12 references, 11 times Jesus was the one who used the reference to "Gehenna" as hell. He very explicitly spoke about this place of suffering and punishment. Out of 19 times in the New Testament when there is reference to the term "hell fire," Jesus used it 12 of those 19 times, referring to "hell fire." He very definitely said that there is a place, and it's a place of flaming suffering.

Jesus referred to hell as a place for the unsaved more than anyone else in the New Testament. When you add them all together, it was the Lord who had more references to hell as a place of flaming punishment than anybody else in the New Testament. So, His Word is sufficient.

**Burning Flames**

Hell is frequently referred to in the Bible as a place of burning flames. This begins in the earliest books of the Bible, in Daniel 7:11, in Isaiah 66:24, in Matthew 3:12, and in Jude 7. All those verses, you will find, refer to hell as a place of flames. It is not a country club setting.

Therefore, what the Bible teaches about hell as a real place cannot be spiritualized. The Bible never refers to it as if it were simply a symbol for something. And the bodies of those who are in hell are never consumed. That is the most devastating thought. The bodies are never consumed. We think, when we refer to as flames, that something can be destroyed by the flames. Here's how we know: Revelation 20:5 says, "The rest of the dead (that is, the unbelievers) did not come to life until the 1,000 years of the Millennial Kingdom were completed. This is the first resurrection." The Bible has a first and second resurrection. All believers are raised in the first resurrection. That takes place before the millennium. The rest of the dead, the unbelievers from the earliest dawn of human history to the end of time, are left in their graves during the whole Millennium Kingdom.

Then notice verses 12-15. The millennium is over: "And I saw the dead, the great and small, standing before the throne (the throne of God – the great white throne). And books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books according to their deeds." They have nothing but their human good works to offer God in justification for their sins, and that isn't sufficient: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them, and they were judged, every one of them, according to their deeds." And don't forget that human good comes from the sin nature, so it's evil. So, listen-up, all you do-gooders in American society who are going to violate the laws of the purpose of government. I remind you that the purpose of government is not to help you with your personal needs and wants. The purpose of government is to keep the roads fixed; to keep law and order; to keep equal opportunity for people to exercise their unequal abilities; to protect you from internal and external enemies; to maintain the post offices; and, all the other things that civilized society needs. That's what God says is the purpose of human government. When you go beyond that, to all those human good needs, what you have done is entered an area of sin. And the more you do of your human good deeds, the more you will suffer in hell for. I remind you again that there is a degree of suffering in hell according to the degree of your evil.

"And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. Anyone's name not found written in the book of life was thrown in the lake of fire."

So, verse 5 tells us that here are these people who are dead through the whole millennium. After the millennium is over, they are judged on the basis of their works, and are thrown into the lake of fire."

Notice also Revelations 19:20. Before the millennium begins: "The beast was seized, and with him the false prophet, who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast, and those who worshiped his image. These two were thrown in the lake of fire which burns with brimstone."

OK, the millennium begins, and the antichrist and false prophet are thrown into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. 1,000 years later, in Revelation 20:10, what is their condition? Are their bodies burnt up? Are their souls burnt up? Are they destroyed? "And the devil who deceived them 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." This verse covers the fact that the false prophet and the antichrist have been given their resurrected bodies now, because everybody is resurrected. Whether you're saved or unsaved, all bodies that ever lived are brought back to life. And then they are put into this lake of fire and brimstone in their physical bodies, where they experience the pain of eternal suffering, and they are never consumed. Your soul is never consumed. It cannot be. Your soul is you, and in your soul, you do feel pain. For 1,000 years, the false prophet and the antichrist have been suffering the agonies of the lake of fire. Now, a new dimension is added – their physical bodies.

So, this is a very sobering announcement by this angel – that God's indignation and anger is going to be directed toward those who have chosen to worship a false God. The epitome of that is the worship of the antichrist. They will be in this terrible place that was prepared for the devil and his demon angels.

Then, the end of verse 9 says a very dramatic, amazing thing which we shall look at next time. What is happening to this people (to these rejecters – these unbelievers), is happening in the presence of the God who has provided salvation for them. We thank our Lord that He enlightened us and brought us into the family of God, and that this terrible place is a place that you will observe, and you will observe with amazement, and have a new degree of appreciation for what it has meant to have received the grace of God that brought you into the enlightenment of salvation through simply accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Do you know what "grace" means? It means, "Keep your cotton-pickin' hands off the system. Grace means a gift. I could illustrate what grace means by saying, "Come up here, and I'm going to give you this Bible." You come up here and say, "This is a valuable Bible. I appreciate all your fingerprints and all that. I'll cherish that for all my days. But I can't take this. Let me give you $100 for it." If I take that $100, this Bible is no longer a gift. And I say, "No, no, I must give it to you as a gift. I have a divine mission." You might say, "Well, I'm not going to. You're going to get $50," and you start stuffing money all over my pockets." But you say, "Thank you for your gift." However, it's no gift. You just paid me for it.

Isn't it amazing how dumb people are, such that they think that if I go to God, and I say, "I trust in Christ as Savior, and here's my human work of water baptism." God says, "If you do water baptism, I can't take you to heaven. If you bring water baptism as part of your salvation, you've paid me! You've done a ritual! I can't take you to heaven now. I can only take you on the basis of grace – a gift. Now, your water baptism, as an expression of what I have done for you, and as an expression of gratitude, that's OK. You're not trying to pay Me by making it part of your salvation.”

Romans 11:6 says, "If it's works, it's not a grace; and, if it's grace, it's not works." Take it seriously. That's why millions of people who sit in church like you do, praising God and hitting the offering boxes, are going to end up in this horrible place of the lake of fire. Don't let it happen to you.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1992

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