***Characteristics of Hell vs. the Character of God

RV235-01***

Our subject is "The Battle of Armageddon." This is segment number four in Revelation 19:17-21.

**The End of the Tribulation**

At the end of the seven-year tribulation era, the earth will be reeling from a series of catastrophes in nature. Most of the 6 billion mankind that now inhabit the earth will be dead as the result of a series of divine judgments. At His Second Coming, Christ destroys the armies of the nations gathered at Armageddon that have gathered to oppose Him and His saints returning from heaven. The millions of bodies that will be on the battlefield following that confrontation will become food for the scavenger birds called to that particular mission by an angel of God.

The world government, which the antichrist has established, and which in our day is even now in the process of being put together, will collapse. The antichrist and the false prophet are seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire as its first inhabitants. The slaughter of the armies and the collapse of civilization is entirely the result of the actions which have been taken by mankind and its leaders.

This is not something that God has brought upon people. This is something that people have brought upon themselves. They have treated God with contempt. They are cast aside the Bible. They have ridiculed it as a final authority which must be obeyed. The antichrist has blasphemously been worshiped as God, and the mark of allegiance has been accepted by the worshipers on their very bodies.

The justice of God against the arrogant evil of mankind finally reaches the point of maximum wrath, and it is poured out in judgment. The end of the road, please remember, of all of this is hell. The end of the road is the lake of fire. Stop and think for a moment what it is we're talking about. People are deliberately moving toward hell today. The rejection of Christ is characteristic of humanity today – the rejection of the Word of God, so they are moving into the lake of fire.

**Hell**

When someone dies, especially someone of great prominence, it is not uncommon for us to say, "Where has that person gone?" Sometimes we look at that individual's religious system. If the religious system teaches a false way of salvation, then we have strong reason to believe that that individual, whatever religious rituals may surround the deceased, has not gone into heaven. If they have been true to what they have been taught on salvation, which is not a biblical way of grace, then that individual, whether famous or infamous, known or unknown, is not in heaven, but is in this terrible place called the lake of fire, commonly referred to as hell.

The condition of the lake of fire is also reflected by characteristics which are identical in the place called Hades, which is a holding pen today for all unbelievers and certain demons who eventually will be put into the lake of fire. As of today, nobody is in the lake of fire. The first two people that will enter it will be the antichrist and the false prophet. Eventually, Satan will be there with all of his demons. And all of humanity, from the time of Adam on down, who have rejected the vision of a Savior will also be there.

**Characteristics of Hell**

Interestingly enough, the Bible gives us more information about hell than it does about heaven. A few characteristics of hell may give us a better perspective on the terrible condition to which people are moving today, and which the tribulation will bring to an epitome.

1. **Hell will be filled with Rejecters of Jesus Christ**

One of the characteristics of hell is that it will be filled with rejecters of Jesus Christ as Savior – those who have turned their back upon Christ as Savior. It's not going to be a big reunion of your fraternity, or of your sorority. It's not going to be a place where old friends gather. It is going to be a place with people who have turned their backs upon salvation, and upon the person of Jesus Christ.

John 3:36 says, "And he who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him." So, here you are in hell, surrounded by people who have upon them the wrath of God.

1. **Hell is a place of Actual Burning Flames**

A second characteristic of hell is that it is a place of flames. It is a place of actual burning heat from which there is no relief. We have this shown to us in Luke 16:24, where the rich man is in Hades, or the way station, which will be just like the lake of fire. He cried out and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may get the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame." It is no wonder that Satan is constantly telling people to ignore hell, and that there couldn't be such a place, and that a God of love would not reach such a place. That is ignoring that the justice of God demands exactly such a place, and that is why that kind of a place does exist. It is a thing that we recoil from in horror to think of someone who this life has everything (fame and fortune) closes his eyes in death, and suddenly finds himself as this rich man did, in utter torment (not physical, as his body is not there), which soul and spirit can feel. And in time, it will be physical.

In Revelation 20:10, we read, "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." There is no release from this place.

I saw a video this past week which was portraying what happens with people who die, and go over to the other side, and come into the presence of judgment. One of the sequences was a young man who considered himself a very quality type of person because he went to church. And suddenly, he realizes that, yes, he was a church person, but he never accepted Christ as Savior. He was a confident, good person. While his girlfriend that he attended church with was born-again, and on her way to heaven, he is weeping and crying out, "I don't want to go to hell. I don't want to go to the lake of fire." And the tears were streaming down from his eyes. And the saddest part about that is that there can't be any change. His destiny was sealed by his own choice, and now there is no return. Hell means that you will look forward to flames forever with no relief.

1. **People in Hell will have a Memory**

A third point about hell is that we have the memory of God's truth. We have the memory of divine viewpoint truth that we rejected. That's terrible. Luke 16:25, again, in the case of the rich man: "And Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise bad things. But now he is being comforted here and you are in agony.'" "Child, remember." Oh yes. On the other side, you can remember everything, and you will remember the truth, and you will remember the opportunity of salvation. You will remember all the things that might have been. In the case of the unbeliever, he will remember that Jesus Christ, whom he just passed off as a superstition. This man in hell also remembers the family he left behind, and the hell raisers that they are. He remembers those five brothers that are going to end up in this same place if they are not convinced of the reality of such a place as hell.

1. **A Permanent Separation from God**

A fourth characteristic of hell is that it's a permanent separation from God, the loving Creator. In 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: "For after all, it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted, and to us as well, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God, and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, for our testimony to you was believe."

Paul is saying that the time is going to come when God is going to separate unbelievers from Himself forever. There is a longing set into the soul of man for God. He has a longing to reach out there for someone who is greater than himself. Even nature around him indicates that someone is out there. This longing to be fulfilled becomes an agony for all eternity. It's like having an itch that, no matter what you do, you can't scratch it, and you can't satisfy it.

You may also to this Matthew 7:23: "Then I would declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me you who practice lawlessness.'" This is permanent separation from the loving God of creation.

1. **Surrounded by Satan and his Demons**

A fifth characteristic of hell is that the individual will be surrounded by Satan and his filthy demons. Matthew 25:41: "And He will also say to those on his left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" You will notice how repeatedly fire is associated with hell. The flames of suffering are there. Here, God says, "You will be surrounded by Satan and his demon angels."

Have you ever been in the company of people that have a filthy mouth? Every now and then, we run into someone who is extremely foul-mouthed. They are continually cursing, and continually using bad language, and it just becomes oppressive. These filthy demons are going to be in rage. You will hear them say terrible things toward our God – the blasphemy that they will be uttering in their agony; and, for all eternity, you'll never be able to walk away from that scene.

1. **The Old Sin Nature**

A sixth characteristic of hell is that one is burdened forever with the lusts of the old sin nature. Without regeneration and salvation, there's no control, and there is no removal of that sin nature's lust patterns. And those patterns of lust will be pounding away at the individual for all eternity. John 8:24: "I said therefore to you that you shall die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am He, you shall die your sins." You shall die in all those lust patterns of your sin nature, never to be satisfied. That is an agony in itself.

1. **No Peace**

Then, quite obviously, a seventh characteristic of hell is that there's not a moment of peace. You have a hard day at work. You've been at a hard task. You've been under a high-demand situation. And finally, the day ends, and the situation ends, and you sit down and say, "Now I can have a moment of peace. The pressure is off."

Well, in the lake of fire, the pressure is never off. There is never a moment of peace. Isaiah 57:21 says, "'There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked.'" What a doctrinal principle to remember. *There is no peace for the wicked.* There really isn't any peace for the wicked here on earth, and there certainly won't be out in eternity.

Remember that I'm giving you a picture here of the lake of fire in order to give you a frame of reference of what it is we're talking about that mankind, by its deliberate rejection of the Word of God, is bringing itself into for all eternity.

Revelation 14:11 also says, "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day and night – those who worshiped the beast and his image, and whoever received the mark of his name. There will be no rest, and not a moment of peace.

1. **Total Darkness**

Then an eighth characteristic (a sobering characteristic) of the lake of fire is revealed in Jude 6-7: "Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they, in the same way as these, indulged in gross immorality (that is, homosexuality and lesbianism), and went after strange flesh (here referring particularly to demon spirits who intermarried with human women), and exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. Yet in the same manner, these men also, by dreaming, defile the flesh, reject authority, and revile angelic messengers."

Verse 13: "And wild ways of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam, wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever." So, here is a place of burning that's also totally dark. Have you ever been in a totally dark place? If you ever visit Carlsbad Caverns, when you get down deep into the caverns where no shaft of light can come down from the opening, they used to have the touring group sit on a bunch of benches. Then the Ranger tried to prepare people that he was going to give them an experience of total darkness and total blackness. He would say, "We're going to turn the lights off for a minute. Everybody get quiet." Then they turned the lights off, and it is black. Literally, you can't see your hand. You can't see the person next to, which sometimes is a blessing. But I mean it is wiped out. It is black. It is dark.

Suppose that suddenly, you're all by yourself there: "Mr. Ranger?" Silence. "Mommy?" Silence. There is nobody around. "Well, I'll make my way out." You wouldn't know where to go. You're sitting there. Now if you're suffering the pains of flames, and there's total blackness. And all you hear are the sounds of these filthy creatures around you. What are you having? You're having what you wanted to have. You're having what all of your life you have pursued. You pursued the lifestyle of Satan's viewpoint, and here is the fruit.

This is what we're talking about in the book of the Revelation as the final outcome of mankind's resistance against God since the days of Nimrod on.

We may also 2 Peter 2:17, which says, "These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved." That is the black darkness of the lake of fire.

1. **Unbelievers are Consciousness**

The ninth characteristic of the lake of fire, as we've already indicated, is that the unbelievers who are there are conscious. Mark 9:48 says, "Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." Those maggots on the body are always there. There is always conscious life there. And as we saw in the case of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man was fully conscious in the lake of fire, and fully conscious of what is happening. This is one of the things that Satan lies about, and tries to convince people of that is not true.

**Jehovah's Witnesses**

The whole denomination of the Jehovah's Witnesses teaches that people who are lost will be rubbed out of existence, and that there is no such place as hell. Please don't come up to me after the service and say, "I have a friend who is a Jehovah's Witness, and she doesn't believe that at all." Sometimes people say, "You're not telling us the truth about what these other religious groups believe," and they do it because they've talked to some individual who recoils from what his own church teaches. But I can assure you that this is Jehovah Witness doctrine – the elimination of human beings out of existence, like a dog or some animal, so that they cannot suffer. Jehovah's Witnesses say that there is no hell. And Satan is the one who has told them that. But God says, "Yes, there is a hell, and you'll be fully conscious in it from the moment you enter it.

1. **Spiritually Dead Forever**

Characteristic number 10 is that you remain spiritually dead forever in hell. Spiritually dead means separated from any association with God. Revelation 20:14 says, "And death and Hades were thrown in the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire." This second death is the final determination of all unbelievers. Eternal separation from God.

1. **A Horrible Place**

Finally, point number 11 about the characteristics of hell is that it is simply a horrible place in which to spend one's eternity. Matthew 8:8-10: "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter like a crippled or lame than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire." Jesus does not actually mean that you should mutilate yourself, but He's trying to bring a picture of contrast that even that would be better if that would keep you out of the lake of fire: "And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than having two eyes and to be cast into the fiery hell."

Why would He use such strong language? Because it is an unimaginably horrible place for a human being to take himself into. Make no mistake about it. You are there because you chose to be there.

Hebrews 10:26 says, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the spirit of grace. For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine. I will repay.' Again, the Lord will judge His people. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And so indeed it is.

It's no fun to follow through to the ultimate consequences of mankind's resistance, of the Word of God, and of the God who is there. Yet, that does raise the question: how could the human race, with all of its intelligence and its technology, bring such unrestrained divine wrath upon itself as will be expressed in the lake of fire? How can the tribulation and the mass of humanity end up in that kind of devastation?

**Ungodliness**

Please turn once more to Romans 1:18, in order to be sure that we understand the connection. Romans 1:18 indicates to us that this destruction of mankind is the natural progression from what the Bible calls ungodliness: "For the wrath of God (which is what the lake of fire is an expression of) is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness. The Greek word for "ungodliness" here means defiance of God. It means defiance of His instruction in the Bible. It means a lack of reverence. It means a lack of fear of God. When you do not fear God; when you do not fear the Creator; and, when you do not fear His authority, the result is ungodliness. And from ungodliness, there is an inevitable progression. Ungodliness inevitably degenerates downward into unrighteousness. When you have no respect for God; when you pass him off as a fairy tale; and, when you do not have a healthy fear of God, then the result is ungodliness.

**Unrighteousness**

Ungodliness progresses downward to unrighteousness. When you do not fear God, the result is unrighteousness. Unrighteousness refers to morally evil conduct. It refers to unrestrained indulgence of the old sin nature. Unrighteousness is a product of godliness. This is a very important doctrinal principle. People who reject God, reject His laws in the Bible. Unrighteousness is the result of godliness. People who reject the Bible are taking the role of ungodliness toward God, and it goes to unrighteousness.

Now, when society sees the consequences of this society, says, "We have to solve this." You all probably listened to the news yesterday. There were a couple of women driving through a drive-in at McDonald's, picking up an order. And two lowlife types walked up with guns to have a carjacking. The women were driving in a nice car. They tell them to get out of the car. Even while they're doing it, they start shooting. One of the women, a mother of a couple of small children, was killed; and, the other seriously wounded. Now, our society is aware of crime. It is becoming the number one political issue. Everybody is suddenly talking about crime.

What is our society going to do to solve crime? Some kind of government social programs? What are they doing? They're saying, "We have unrighteousness. We have to solve unrighteousness." How do we get rid of unrighteousness? The Bible says, "Go back and solve the ungodliness problem." Once you solve ungodliness, and there's a respect for God and a respect, consequently, for the Word of God, then unrighteousness will be solved.

In the past century, England became a more an enormously immoral nation filled with crime and with the worst kinds of things. And suddenly, England became a paragon of virtue, and an example to the world. What caused this great transformation? The one great thing that changed in England was the beginning of the Sunday school movement. So, suddenly something like 90% of the children were in Sunday school, and a large number of adults. The Sunday school program was teaching the principles of the Word of God, because people came to have a respect and a fear of God. Consequently, when they had learned the respect for God and the Word of God, righteous conduct was the normal outcome. That's the only way it works.

You cannot come up with a program for the government to solve crime at any level, because the program that needs to be solved is this program of ungodliness. If the government wanted to really solve the crime problem, then they should be given money to schools like Berean Christian Academy, so that they wouldn't have to scrape the barrel in order to establish the principle of godliness with youth, so that the result is that they grow up, and they are not the kind that are going around doing the violence and the crime. That is not their characteristic. That is not their nature.

I hope that that little connection between ungodliness; indifference; and, disrespect for God, and the result of evil conduct will help you to understand why I emphasize, and come down so hard, on the fact that your children should be in Sunday school. It is a great disservice to your children while they, under your care up to their high school years, for you not to wake up on Sunday morning and say, "In 15 minutes, we're on our way to Sunday school." Oh, yeah, it's better for you to be there in a class, but it is infinitely better for you at least to bring them to Sunday school, and drop them off, and go home yourself, than for you not to have them there at all. This is a very serious failure on the part of parents – not to have their sons and daughters in Sunday school. If you do this, from their earliest years, then when they become teenagers, they won't say, "Hey, I'm a senior in high school. What do you mean? I'm going to graduate this year. Do you expect me to get up in the morning, and go sit in a Bible class? Do you know who I am?" No, it'll be just the normal thing. It'll be like breathing to them. They wouldn't think of being anyplace else on Sunday morning than in Bible study.

If you give them that, I can guarantee you one thing. When the two of you go out into eternity, and are in the presence of God, that child is going to look up to you and say, "Dad and Mom, I can't tell you how much I appreciate the fact that you kept me in Sunday school all those years, because you understood the doctrinal principle that ungodliness and indifference toward God (which is our natural inclination) can only be overcome by instruction in the Word of God so that the product is righteous conduct.

These human disasters, that we read about in the book of the Revelation, furthermore, we're told in Romans 1:18, are the result of suppressing the truth: "Revealed from heaven against all and godliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in their unrighteousness. It's the suppression of the truth of the Word of God. That's the problem. Where do you get the Word of God? You get it in Sunday school. Yes, you get it in training union. Yes, you get it in the church services certainly. Yes, you get it in the youth club meetings. Yes, you get it in the academy. These are the places where the Word of God is promoted – and not least of all, in your own talking about it at home.

There is where young people pick up their first impact of the impact of the Word of God. If you don't talk about the Word of God at home, do you realize that you're suppressing the truth of God? If you don't have this child in Sunday school and training union, do you realize that you're suppressing the truth of God for him? This child was given to you, on loan from God, to be reared as a godly man or a godly woman with righteous conduct as a characteristic of that life. If you hold down that child from information, or you hold yourself down from access to that information, then ungodliness will lead to that unrighteous conduct.

Ungodliness makes people very bold to suppress the Word of God. Usually, when you don't like God, and when you don't like the principles of the Word of God, you attack the teacher. You consider him the source of your problem instead of the fact that it is the Word of God. You say that the teacher is not teaching what is in the Word of God, because ungodliness wants to defend its unrighteousness, justifying what it's doing.

**Heathenism**

Let's put it together. Negative volition to God's doctrinal truth, which is revealed in both creation and in the Bible, constitutes heathenism. This is what heathenism is. Negative relation to the truth of the Word of God and to what God is revealed in nature itself is heathenism. You thought that heathenism was somebody you never heard the Word of God. You thought that heathenism was somebody way out there in some jungle who never heard the gospel. No, that is not what heathenism is. Heathenism is negative volition toward the truth. Aha! So, here I am – a cultured, educated American in this refined society, and I'm a heathen because I reject the principles of doctrine.

One young lady told me last Sunday that her mother's way of socking and slapping away at her doctrinal viewpoint that the mother does not accept is that the mother says, "Well, I'm just a heathen." Our young lady said, "Now, after what you have shown us, she's right. She is a heathen." Negative attitudes toward the Word of God makes her a heathen. And I don't know whether she's going to have the courage (it's probably not a good idea to say) to say, "Yes, mother, you're right. You're a heathen." That probably is not too swift of a thing to do. But at least she understands what's going on. She's got the picture straight now that her mother is giving her a little sloughy, off-the-cuff reaction and comment. But, oh, how true it is.

**God-Consciousness**

Heathenism is not: "I don't know what to believe," or "I can't believe to be saved." It means, "I don't choose to believe, and I don't choose to know." No human being has ever lived who did not come to an age of conscious responsibility (an age of awareness), where that individual did not look around himself and say, "He's out there." We call that God-consciousness. I don't care what society you're in (in the darkest backgrounds of whatever country on earth), every individual, when he comes to an age of accountability, looks up and says, "Someone's out there." He might say, "I better make an image of Him. I think this is what He must look like. It may be like an eagle. It may be like a falcon. It may be like a chicken. Whatever it is, I'm going to make it, and I'm going to bow down before Him."

Down in the heart of man is that sense of God consciousness. When you come to the point of God consciousness, and there's a positive reaction, then God comes into the picture, and He brings you the message of the gospel. Most human beings don't care about God when they become aware of Him. Most human beings do not want to subject themselves to anything but the expression of their sin natures.

So, now here's this issue of heathenism. From the 1st century, the world has experienced extensive evangelization. Acts 17:6, Colossians 1:6, and 1 Timothy 3:16 all indicate how, immediately, in New Testament times, the known world was extensively evangelized. And no full records remain for us to know all the places that the gospel has gone to. Many places that were once mission fields are now sources of gospel information. People were saved on the day of Pentecost. They spread the gospel as they returned home from Jerusalem. Acts 2:9-11 tell us that. The world, therefore, has probably, from nation-to-nation, been evangelized at some time since the day of Pentecost. That means that some nations which once were evangelized, and had access to the knowledge of the gospel, have receded back into spiritual darkness. That has happened.

**The Character of God**

Now, the question is: is this fair to the heathen? Is this the right thing for God to do? Well, let's take a look at the character of God.

1. **Sovereign**

First, there is God's sovereignty. 2 Peter 3:9 says that God does not want anybody to spend eternity in the lake of fire. Thus, those who experience eternal death do so by their own choice, as John 3:18 points out. If salvation for each is what God desires, then each will be given his chance to be saved. That's what Titus 2:11 tells us: "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation information to all men." Titus 2:11 says that the grace of God has appeared, and brought salvation to all men. The sovereignty of God is going to be on the side of the heathen.

1. **Absolute Righteousness**

Let's take a look at the absolute righteousness of God. God cannot take a sinner into heaven unless He has the ground to enter heaven, which means that that sinner has to have absolute righteousness himself. The doctrine of unlimited atonement shows that God has paid for the sins of all mankind. This doctrine is taught, for example, in 1 John 2:2, which says, "And He Himself is the propitiation (Jesus Christ is the satisfaction) for our sins. And not for us only, but also for those of the whole world." That person who died and has gone out into eternity, whose church taught him a wrong way of salvation, is in the holding pen of Hades, getting ready to go into the lake of fire with his sins all paid for. That's the tragedy. All sins of all mankind, from Adam on down, have been covered. Sin is no longer an issue of God.

John 3:15 says, "Whosoever may believe in Christ and be saved." That is any member of the human race. John 3:15: "Whoever believes may in him have eternal life." The sins of the whole world were poured out upon Jesus Christ from noon to 3:00 in the afternoon. Christ dealt with all the evil from the sin nature on the cross, both the human good and the sins. Ultimate unlimited atonement was the result, but it provided limited redemption, or the application of that unlimited atonement. Yes, all sins are covered, but only certain people go to heaven – those that God chooses. And we won't get into that doctrine right now, but it involves the positive volition of the sinner.

**Unlimited Atonement**

I'll just mention a few verses: 2 Corinthians 5:14-19; 1 Timothy 2:6; 1 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1; and 1 John 2:2. God's unlimited atonement (the whole thing) has been covered. All these verses remove that problem. Christ died for those who are spiritually dead. That means every person born into the human race (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23).

So, this universal provision of salvation is applied when the person is willing to receive it by trusting in Christ as Savior. That is a non-meritorious act. There is no merit in believing.

So, because God is absolutely righteous, He has made provision for Him to take a believing sinner into heaven, and still preserve His own personal righteousness is God. He imputes the righteousness of God to the believing sinner.

1. **Justice**

How about the justice of God? God cannot be unfair to anyone. No one is sent to the lake of fire who has not had the chance to go positive to God, and to be saved: positive to God-consciousness; and, positive toward gospel-hearing. How this is done in each individual's case is not always known. But no one is in the lake of fire without having had a chance to accept God's salvation.

1. **Love**

How about the love of God? God's love extends to all, so salvation is offered to each (1 John 4:9). The plan of God for mankind is a grace operation, so none is excluded. Because it's of grace, and not of works, a person can be on his deathbed, and be the worst creature in the world, and suddenly, the gospel impact is made upon his mind by the Holy Spirit; he believes the gospel; and, he is born again.

In that same videotape that I told you about earlier, one of the people who died, and is out there in heaven with this group of people is a mass-serial-murderer. He was executed by the state. But just before the execution, he asked to speak to the chaplain. The chaplain presented the gospel, and he believed.

The young woman who was the Christian, and her boyfriend, who was not the Christian, both died. They were out in eternity together. The young man knew that he was going to hell; and, the young woman knew that she was going to heaven. And her sister was one of the people that this mass-murderer had killed. This serial killer had killed her sister. Her sister would not believe the gospel. And it showed these scenes of her telling her sister, "This is what God has done for you. This is what you need. Your sins need to be covered. God's love has provided this for you. The sister did not believe.

So, here you have the shocking scene that the serial killer is in eternity, being ushered into heaven, whereas the person he killed is being ushered into Hades, preparatory for going into the lake of fire.

God is just. God is fair. His love extends to all. But grace is the technique by which we come to salvation. It's an act of trust in Christ, not an act of something we have done. Once this plan has been entered, a person can never get out again (John 10:28), because it's all been done by God.

1. **Eternal Life**

How about the eternal life of God? God seeks to share His eternal life. Eternal life is conscious union with God forever. God does not promote eternal death for anybody. Never say that God sends some people to hell, and some people to heaven. No. All the Bible says is that He just leaves some people where they already are – on their way to the lake of fire. But He picks out certain ones that He wants in His heaven.

1. **Omniscience**

How about the omniscience of God? God knows every human being personally. Therefore, He knows how to make the provision necessary. The omnipotent God has the power to save every individual.

1. **Omnipresence**

How about the presence of God? God is everywhere, so He can regenerate any person who's willing to be born-again.

1. **Immutability**

How about the immutability (the unchangeableness) of God? God cannot change what He is (Hebrews 13:8, Malachi 3:6). God's plan of salvation covers all. It never changes. Positive volition to the gospel is life. Negative volition is death. God never changes the rules. God never changes the plan. God doesn't readjust for some.

One of the men who did go out into eternity in this same videotape was a very sophisticated professor. He was an educated man, and he was a man who was against the death penalty. He was carrying on for being loving, and being kind, and being human, and overcoming these terrible qualities. But the one thing he didn't have was faith in Christ as Savior. It was a pathetic thing to see him out there trying to plead his cause on the basis of what a good philosopher he was, and the integrity that he had, none of which counted. God could not say, "Well, you know, you really were a nice guy. I'm going to make an exception in your case. Come on into heaven."

Now, one of your favorite TV personalities, Phil Donahue, believes that. I'll never forget the time when Phil Donahue was talking about heaven and hell. He had somebody on the program, and people were talking about how they get to heaven. Finally he said, "Listen, this is the way I look at it. Judgment day is going to come, and we're all there. All of you; me; all of us: we're all there. And we're standing, and there is the door in front of us. God's going to come through. We're all standing; we're suffering; and, we're waiting to see our destiny. The door to heaven opens, and God comes out." And Phil said, "And He's going to stand there, and he's going to look us over, and he's going to say, 'Ah, come on in – all of you.'" What a blasphemous remark! What a deception!

However, do you know what? There are millions of human beings (Americans) who listened to that program, who breathed a sigh of relief, because Pastor Donahue had reassured them: "Ah, come on in – all of you." Why? Because God is love. No, God is love, but God is immutable. He does not change His righteousness which demands perfection as good as Christ to be in heaven. And it does not change His justice, which means that the penalty for sin is death, and it has to be paid. God is always faithful. Lamentations 3:22-23 point that out.

1. **Veracity**

Finally, what about the truth of God: His veracity? People lie, but God does not (Numbers 23:19). God has promised eternal life to all those who are willing to receive it on His grace basis. He has never promised eternal life to those who want to take it on their own works basis. But if you take it on his grace basis, you're in. Titus 1:2 says, "In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ago." God says that His plan of salvation covers all, and it's available to all; and, that's that. His plan covers all; it's available to all; and, that is that.

So, a person can reject a God who is true to His own character. This is an act of ungodliness that has no respect for such a God that has these characteristics, and has done what He has done. That act of ungodliness leads to the unrighteousness that rejects the gospel, and that gives full vent to the sin nature, and condemns that person to the horrible condition that we have reviewed in this session that constitutes the lake of fire.

Why would anybody want to do that? And we might shake our heads and say, "Boy, I don't know why." But I must tell you that the only reason you and I shake our heads and say, "I don't know why" is because God opened our minds – or we'd be out there with the rest of them: hellbent into the tribulation disaster, and creating a world as all the world leaders are today, of a world government, and a world dominion over the lives of people, restricting freedom in order to do good for people. We'd all be right up there in front with them if it wasn't for the fact that one day, God the Creator touched our shoulder, and He said, "I want you in My family." And our minds broke open to the light of the Word of the gospel, and we said, "Yes." God is true to Himself, and to His own character. If you do not respect Him for what He is, and for what He has done, you will bear the terrible consequences. May that never be true of any who have learned the Word of God's grace gospel.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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