

# ReGroup 2/26/23

## Eternity: Hell

After weeks of uplifting, exciting conversations and studies about Heaven, our focus now shifts to the alternative eternal destination: Hell. Everyone will spend forever somewhere, and there are only two options. *Think about that* - One day, everyone will pass from this life to the next, and they will either open their eyes in Heaven or in Hell.

Over the last several studies, we got an amazing glimpse of the bliss awaiting Christians in Heaven. As wonderful as this hope is, for those not saved and who don't follow Jesus, a future of judgement awaits.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will open the Bible for a thorough, sobering description of Hell. However, first it would be most beneficial if we discussed a few things pertaining to Hell. There are several things that need to be understood before we talk about what Hell is like. So, we will seek to answer the following questions in this lesson:

- Why is there a Hell? Has there always been a Hell? Why did God create it?
- What does it say about God that Hell had to be created? Does God's wrath contradict God's love?
- Who goes to Hell? Why do they go to Hell? Is there any second chance for them?
- How should Christians communicate the reality of Hell and warn people about it?

### ***Where Did It Come From?***

Whereas Heaven has always been God's dwelling place, Hell *hasn't* always existed. At some point in Eternity past, *God created Hell*. The Bible gives us plenty of insight regarding Hell's origin story. The story of Hell actually begins with the story of an angel. This angel, a guardian cherub, was named *Lucifer* and his story is found in: **Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:11-19, Revelation 12:3-4**

**What is your initial takeaway from these passages? What was the reason for Lucifer's ejection from Heaven?**

While the timeline with regard to the earth's history is uncertain, it's safe to assume that this happened *before* Genesis 3, seeing that Ezekiel says that Lucifer was the Serpent in Eden. So, before the Fall of Man, Lucifer's Fall from Heaven happened and thus, *this was the beginning of sin*.

We don't know how Lucifer's rebellion effected the universe, but clearly it introduced sin and evil into creation. It was this spark of rebellion that went on to tempt and spur Humanity's fall into sin. Much theological speculation and debate can be had about why God *allowed* this or *if* God even sovereignly *intended* this to take place, but needless to say, *it was not His perfect will*.

**Yet, that didn't keep Him from creating people and ultimately the risk He took in making the earth and giving humanity a chance would go on to cost Him the most, seeing the measures He took to redeem everything.**

We also don't know why Lucifer wasn't destroyed or why he was allowed to become the tempter or accuser that we know him as today. The Hebrew for Adversary or Accuser is where Lucifer gets the name we mostly refer to him as: **Satan**. The Greek word for Adversary or Accuser is **Devil** - hence, why these two names are used interchangeably to reference the same being.

We find Satan showing up in the Old Testament to do what his name suggests: *To accuse God's people*. Check out **Job 1:6-7, Zechariah 3:1, and 2 Chronicles 21:1**

It could be said that God chose to *use* Satan, rather than destroy him. Perhaps bringing the final judgement on him would require him to instantly judge any who sin. Regardless, though sin came into Creation as a result of Satan's rebellion, temptation was going to happen with or without him. So, God put Satan on a leash to use him to *test* Creation, and to bring all the more glory through those who resist sin.

While Satan is being used by God, those who rebelled with him are in captive, in the place that God created to house all who choose a life of sin and rebellion: *Hell*. Read **Matthew 25:41, 2 Peter 2:4, and Jude 6**. Hell was created to judge those who rebelled against God in Heaven, and would be the eternal destination of all who rebelled against God on earth. **Isaiah 5:14** tells us that Hell has only gotten bigger because more and more die outside of God's grace.

**Discuss the story behind Hell and the reason why Hell was made. What are your thoughts about this? What questions do you have?**

## ***How Could God Do That?***

Atheists love to ask this one question to Christians: *Why would a loving God send anyone to Hell?* In reality, most of these kinds of questions get asked because people repeat what they've heard others ask, without thinking them through. The truth is, God *has never* and *will never* send anyone to Hell. People go to Hell *by their own choice* - **A choice of rejection**. This was why God created Hell out of necessity, and why Hell has remained a destination for so many.

*But shouldn't God intervene when people act ignorantly? Shouldn't God just save people automatically?* We should consider that God has already did the heavy lifting when it comes to our salvation, *without us even asking Him to do it*. God has *already* taken care of every sin of every sinner. **Read John 3:16-18 and discuss the provision that God has made for us**. From the cross forward, *unbelief*, not sin, has sent people to Hell. Jesus has paid the price for all sin, but we must trust in Him as our Savior to have His blood applied to us.

It was **the holiness of God** that forced Him to respond to Satan's rebellion and create a place of judgment. It was **the love of God** that *forced* Him to send Jesus to cross to suffer all of Hell's judgment to give people salvation from Hell. It is **the unbelief of mankind** that leads anyone to Hell.

*Think about this* - **If God didn't judge sin or sinners, how loving would that be to those who have been wronged or treated unjustly?** Also, **after what Jesus did to save people from Hell, how could He not judge those who reject Jesus?** Read **Hebrews 2:3** and **10:28-29** and **discuss** the price Jesus paid and how you feel about these truths about Hell.

## ***Who Goes There?***

As we just discussed, Hell will be the eternal home for any and all who reject Jesus. Either we trust Jesus and His work to save us from our sin, or we will spend eternity attempting to pay off our own sin. However, the debt is so great, that we will *never even get close* to paying for it. The only solution and the only way of salvation is to trust in Jesus and be covered by His blood, as **Acts 4:12** and **Hebrews 10:12** put it. We are either defined by our Savior *or* our sin.

Either we remain in our flesh, bound by our sin or we have been placed in Christ, liberated by His Spirit. We all, by default deserve Hell, but only through a conscious choice of Christ do we gain access to Heaven. Nobody will go to Heaven by surprise, and on the same hand, nobody will go to Hell undeserving.

This prompts many questions, however - *What about those who have “never heard” the Gospel?* With regard to children, Jesus made it clear that He welcomes all little ones to Him. Those who have yet to reach an age of accountability (*which no doubt varies per child*), will always and forever be welcomed into God’s arms. When David’s infant son died, he had confidence that he had passed on to paradise, see **2 Samuel 12:23**.

*But what about the unreached? What about “the innocent” who are caught up in other religions? What about those who are doing the best they can, yet just haven’t ever heard the Gospel or gotten a real shot at believing?* It’s important we handle this graciously, but the Bible is pretty clear on this matter. Read **Romans 3:9-12** and **discuss** who, if anyone, falls under the “innocent” category.

Nobody is innocent of sin. Whether we realize it or not, *all of us* are guilty before God. Nobody will be saved without a clear, conscious, and personal choice for Christ. Consider this: **Why would God send us to the whole world to preach the Gospel, if hearing the Gospel actually made people \*more\* accountable than they were in their ignorance?** It makes *no* sense, even if it does help us sort through the uncomfortable reality of our world. After all, isn’t Jesus pretty definitive in **John 14:6**? As we have discussed before, the imperative to go and tell cannot be felt more than when we are reminded of Hell. There is a lost world around us, and unless we go and tell, they won’t come to know, see **Romans 10:14-17**.

### ***We Must...***

Read **2 Kings 7:1-9** and hear a powerful story that should resonate with us in light of this study. In this account, a group of outcast lepers found out that God was going to spare the nation of Israel from destruction and relieve them from their famine. Upon connecting all the dots, they determine that they could not keep the good news to themselves. **How much more should we be compelled to go and tell our world about Jesus?**

We know what He’s done for us, and for the whole world. We know what He’s saved us from, so how can we refuse to share this Good News? At the heart of the New Testament and the Church’s mission statement, is the Great Commission and our mandate to spread the Gospel. In closing, read **1 Corinthians 9:16-27** and hear Paul’s passionate sermon about why he lived for the Gospel and discuss how we ought to be driven by the same burden.

*Next week we’ll talk about the nature of Hell, and discuss the difference in Hell and the Lake of Fire. Don’t miss it...*