

The Warning of Hell

Mark 9

It's a pretty well known fact that Jesus preached more about hell than heaven. Why is that? Why would He talk so much about such a terrible place rather than such a wonderful place? The answer is: to give fair warning to all those that heard, that hell is a real place and it is a place no one in their right mind would ever want to go. Jesus was warning them, that hell was a place of unbelievable torment, of unending agony and ultimately a place where all hope is lost.

Scriptures says in *Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:* and *Rev 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.* These two verses should put in us a fear and a dread, and cause us that are saved to make sure we haven't fooled ourselves, to make sure our salvation is genuine, and if it is, to be ever thankful because salvation is the only way to escape the judgment of hell. But these verses should also set us to task, to cause us to have such a burden for those that are lost and on their way to this place called hell, to go out and be a courageous witness for Christ since Jesus said *John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

If we could truly get a picture of what hell is we wouldn't want to go there nor let anyone we know, not even our worst enemy go there. We would be trying a lot harder than what we are today to witness to others, to do like Jesus & warn them of hell. People, **hell is real**, our Savior warned us of it, He preached about it and without Him you will end up there. What I want to do with this message is describe hell to you, first using the reference Jesus uses here in these verses in Mark and then thru the Scriptures so we can see why this isn't a place where wicked and sinful people go to have a big party, to be with their friends, thinking that its no big deal, because it is a big deal, its a place of darkness, of gnashing of teeth, and utter and complete loneliness and ultimately its eternal, there is no end to it. This message is intended to be your warning of hell.

Opening Prayer

Mark 9:43-48

These verses in Mark are telling us we have to deal severely with sin in our lives, Jesus is not literally telling them to harm themselves, since He just got thru telling them sin comes from the heart (Mat 7:20-23). What He is telling them is that sin has to be dealt with in drastic measures. A drastic change has to happen, that the sin in a person's life has to be washed in the sacrificial blood of Christ, you must seek Jesus as your savior, you must repent of your sins, you must seek forgiveness, and turn from you sins and follow Christ into everlasting life. If sin is causing you to stumble you have to extract it from your life (*hand is grabbing on to something it shouldn't, your feet are taking you places where you should not go, or your eye is seeing things it should not see- you must separate that sin from yourself*). You have to extract that sin like you would a cancerous tumor from your body, cancer is not something you can just put a band-aid on and be ok with it, it has to be pinpointed and then surgically removed or treated with harsh medication or even radiation, all drastic measures to remove the disease. And Christ is the only drastic measure that can remove sin from our lives, He had to die so we could apply His blood to wash that sin away, we can't get rid of it ourselves because we are sinners. *Ro 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* We are sinners & due to that sin we are condemned to hell. The only way to escape that condemnation & gain our freedom is thru Jesus Christ, who has paid the price for our sins, we just have to accept His redeeming mercy & grace. Believe and ye shall be saved. The truth shall set you free, free from the penalty and the power of sin, free from the judgment of hell. So sin condemns us to hell, but Christ frees us from it.

But why would we not want to go to hell?, let's look at what Jesus says about it. Jesus uses these phrases in Mark to describe hell...*to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched....to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched....to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

The word I want us to focus on in those phrases is the word "hell". The Hebrew word Jesus uses here for hell is Gehenna, it references a place called the Valley of Hinnom. This is a well known place to his audience, and He is using this reference to help describe hell to His listeners, to give them an idea of what hell is like. The Valley of Hinnom is located southwest of Jerusalem. During the reigns of King Ahaz and King Manasseh ritual worship of the idol god Molech was conducted here. There was a huge metal image of Molech built here, a hollow statue of a man's body (waist up) with outstretched arms/hands and a bull's head (minotaur). The

worshippers were able to heat this metal statue until it glowed red hot and then willing mothers would come & place their babies into these scorching hands and watch them burn.

They sacrificed their children to a dead god, the children of Israel, the apple of God's eye, the people that were led out of Egypt into the Promised Land, slaughtered their own children for a powerless idol god, instead of worshipping & praising the true living God. Molech only offered death, Jehovah offered life. I don't understand how a mother could carry a child in her womb for 9 months and then so carelessly toss it away.

This type of human sacrifice is noted in the scriptures when it mentions letting their sons and daughters "**pass thru the fire**". And, according to some commentaries, if the mothers refused, if they tried to change their minds about offering their children, they were offered to Molech as well. This valley was a place of horrible demonic worship involving human sacrifice. Here there was smoke, heat, fire, darkness, crying and sobbing and weeping of mothers, there was loss and death, sorrow, guilt, stench, burned flesh, and there was screaming, wailing of little ones being burnt alive, and there was the beating of the drums, **drums** were played booming & echoing across the valley to drown out the cries of the little ones as they were offered to Molech. (Topheth – a town located near the valley actually means the beating of the drums)

Now, later on, when **King Josiah** was ruling & he had revival in the land, he tore down this place of ritual idol worship and turned this valley into Jerusalem's garbage dump. All matter of waste was thrown here including dead carcasses as well as the bodies of executed criminals. The cities sewage was even dumped here. Fires were then lit to burn the trash and they were kept burning 24/7, burning continuously, due to the sheer amount of trash and filth that needed to be burned, so there was smoke and unquenched fire. Also this place attracted all sorts of vermin and foul creatures to feed upon the waste and corruption and decay and rot, this was a place where the worms and maggots would not die, there was so much filth for them to feast upon. It was a place of foul odor and stench, acrid air.

Looking upon such a place and knowing its history would disgust anyone, it would be abhorrent to them, **no one would want to go there, no one would want to stay**, this was the place Jesus used to give us a picture of hell, just a glimpse of what hell is like. Just by using one little Hebrew word, Gehenna, He puts a horrid picture in our minds.

It's an understanding in the study of languages that a figure of speech or a description in words is far less intense than the reality that it is trying to describe. (*Example: describing favorite food or a person does not give the full picture, to get that we must experience them, meet them, try them, picture worth 1000 words*) The Valley of Hinnom is only a small picture, a small hint of how terrible a place hell truly is. See why Jesus was warning us of it? No one would desire to go there if they knew it would be like this. They would do anything they could to escape such a place. But the sad fact is so many people actually choose to go there. **And yes its a choice.** It is your choice. You either choose God & Christ & salvation or you choose yourself and the world and judgment. One choice leads to everlasting life & paradise, the other leads to damnation and everlasting death. I can't scare you into making that choice, I can't argue you into it, I can't convince you into it, I can't make that choice for you, all I can do is give you the information to make a well informed choice, it is your choice and yours alone.

Now, can you imagine anyone wanting to live in such a place as the Valley of Hinnom? Can you imagine building your home in the middle of all this? Can you imagine trying to have an enjoyable life with all this going on around you? (with wailing, screaming, weeping, smoke & flame, rot & filth, and stench). Yet so many choose to build their eternal home in just such a place. Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for us, but without Him this kind of place is the best we can do.

Now lets take a look and see what else the Bible tells us of Hell.

*Isa 66:24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: **for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched**; and they shall be an **abhorring unto all flesh**. (abhor= disgusting, loathsome, repellant)*

*Mt 13:41-42 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of **fire**: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **EXPLAIN** gnashing (paper cut)*

*Mt 22:13 Then said the king to the servants, **Bind** him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. BIND – Shadrach/Meshach/Abindigo*

Mt 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

*Mr 9:48 Where **their** worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched* Notice the word used in those verses, the word “their”. This is a word showing possessiveness; it was their own worm, their own agony, their own pain. This was personal, their sin that was never forgiven gnaws at their consciousness, guilt and shame wrack their body along with the searing pain of being burned without end. Its their own personal torment, they are conscience and fully aware of it.

*2Th 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: **9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord**, and from the glory of his power*

*Re 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the **lake of fire**.*

Luke 16:19-31 READ

We can see hell is a place of torment, a place of consciousness and feeling, of fire, no comfort, no help, no mercy, a place of unfulfilled desires, of unanswered prayers, isolation and loneliness, no hope, no escape, no relief, a place of remembrance, of sorrow, of sadness, of shame, of guilt and regret, a place of punishment, of wailing, sobbing, crying, of pain and gnashing of teeth, a place of corruption and death and decay and rot and stench, of outer darkness, of fiery vengeance, and from *Mt 25:46 And these shall go away into **everlasting punishment**: but the righteous into life eternal*. We see that it is eternal, its everlasting, just like the redeemed have the promise of everlasting life, those that don't know Christ, those that reject Him, have the promise of eternal death in a fire that burns but does not consume for ever & ever & ever & ever & ever...

And all that is not the worst part about hell, **I think the worst thing about hell is God is not there**, there is no relationship with Him, He does not answer prayer, He does not respond to your cries, and His protective hand is removed. Just look at the verses we just read, they all denote a separation from God, (go forth, sent forth, cast away, taken away, there not here, departed, from the presence of the Lord, gone away). You didn't want anything to do with God while you were here on earth and that's exactly what you get in your eternal life.

Think about the plagues that were visited upon Egypt. Each plague represented a false god the Egyptians worshipped, for example one god was represented by a frog, God basically said you love frogs this much I'm going to give you more frogs than you ever wanted. I think the same attitude exists with our eternal residence. On one hand, if we desire a relationship with God and accept His Son as savior and try to become more like Him & try to serve Him, Heaven will be a glorious place with a glorious relationship with God, of a close intimate relationship, truly personal. On the other hand, if we reject God down here and we don't want anything to do with Him, that's what we will receive, in spades, we will die and go to hell and spend eternity in separation from God because that's what our lives have reflected that we wanted, that's what we wanted, so that's what we get.

Hell is a place where God is not. Think of how bad this world is now with God's protective hand over it, think if God removed His protective hand and no restrictions were placed on it. (tragedies, murder, violence, war, rape, abortions, perversity, evil, wickedness, vileness, cheating, lying, vulgarity. natural disasters – volcano, tsunami, hurricane, earthquake, tornados, drought, floods, disease & viruses EXPLAIN)

Hell is not a place anyone wants to go. How terrible it would be to die and lift up your eyes in hell like the rich man we just read about, to all of a sudden have all your senses being overwhelmed with pain, with the horrendous noise of screaming and wailing and crying out to a God who does not answer, to have the full realization of guilt and shame and regret wrack your being, to burn under the intense flames of God's wrath, to burn but not be consumed. People, God didn't make this place for us, we are not supposed to go there, He made it for Satan and his angels. **God does not send people to hell, people send themselves there by their choices**

here on earth. The ultimate choice being whether they accept or reject Christ as their personal savior. Its your choice of whether you go here or not!!

Some people may say that the god they believe in would never send anyone to hell because he is a loving forgiving god or they could not believe in a god that would send people to a place like this. Well, I'll use the words of Preacher David Jeremiah to respond to that. You say the god you believe in would never send anyone to hell, I would say you are right, because the god you believe in doesn't exist. The existence of a holy righteous God demands that there is a hell because sin can not exist in His presence because of His holiness and righteousness, and if everybody goes to heaven (no separation of the righteous and the unrighteous) what's the point of Jesus' death burial and resurrection? The crucifixion would be a sick joke. But the existence of the God of the Bible demands that there is a hell, a place to punish sin. Because with salvation you are saved, saved from what? The punishment of sin, the penalty of sin..

Hell is real, it exists, Jesus warns us of it. We should easily see why we should not want to go there ourselves, but I hope you see why we shouldn't want anyone else to go there either. We should be burdened for the lost, those that don't know Christ, because if they died right now, where are they going? (all those lost in Haiti, the tsunami a few years back, if they were not saved they opened their eyes in torment) That's why the great commission is so important, to go and teach all nations, to teach them what?, the good news, the gospel, of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God which taketh away **the sin** of the world, that exact same sin that condemns us to this place called hell. He is the only way we can avoid hell. He commanded us to tell others, yet we remain silent. What if your lost friend or family member died today? The one person you have been too timid or ashamed or too scared to witness to. They would open up their eyes in agony and they would curse your name and hate you to the very core of their being for not telling them, for not praying for them, for not living a life before them that would point them to Christ. You have no friends in hell. The rich man wanted someone to go and tell his family, people we have the ability to tell everyone right now but we don't, because we just don't realize or just don't care how serious this is.

This should show us just how serious Paul was when he stated *Ro 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, 2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:* Paul was willing to be accursed from Christ, to go to hell, so that his brethren, his countrymen, his nation of Israel could be saved. But Paul can only make that choice for himself, not for everyone.

But there was one who was accursed, who was accursed for everyone. *Ga 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:* Christ was accursed for us, Christ experienced hell for us so that we wouldn't have to. Christ is our only hope, Christ is everyone's only hope. Being good won't get you to heaven & it won't keep you out of hell, *Ro 3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one* Works won't save you. It takes the work of someone who was good to save us, that's God, His goodness sent us Christ, Christ's goodness allowed Himself to die for us. *Ro 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us* Only thru the acceptance of Him can you avoid hell and enter into everlasting life. *Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him **should not perish**, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. {**God sent Jesus not to point a finger, but to reach out a hand**}* *18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but **he that believeth not is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Hell is a real place, a place of terrible pain and agony and eternal torment. Jesus warns us of it. The Scriptures warn us of it. It's a place no one with a full understanding of what it is would want to go, to die and lift up their eyes there. That's why God sent His only begotten son to die for us, so we can escape this everlasting damnation. I hope this message burdens your heart for the lost, I hope if you are not saved it has woke you up to the reality of the situation, that hell will be your eternal home if you have not believed upon Jesus Christ, but God has given you a choice, for in *2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* People, hell is a real place, and this is your warning.