

HELL

**Hard topics and how to
read your Bible**

Hell: Sermon 2

1. Two key reminders

2. Tour of eschatological themes

3. Four views on hell

4. Big picture



Hard topics: Mystery



1 Corinthians 13:9-12

“For we know in part and we prophecy in part. But when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child I reasoned as a child. When I became a man I put away childish things.

For now we see indirectly as in a mirror but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully as I am fully known.”

Hard topics: Humility



Job 38

“The Lord answered Job from the whirlwind. He said;
Who is this who obscures my counsel with ignorant words?
Get ready to answer me like a man, when I question you, you
will inform me.

Where were you when I established the earth?”

God does what is best. His ways are right. **BE VERY CAREFUL**
with your “judgements”.

Hard topics: Eschatology - Death



Matthew 10:28

“Don’t fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.
Rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Body = soma

Soul = psyche (spirit)

Destroy = apollymi (same word as in John 3:16 – perish)

Hell = gehena, “valley of fire” (valley near Jerusalem where historically corpses were burned including dead animals)

Hard topics: Eschatology - Death

Samuel 28:13-15

“...the king said to her, ‘don’t be afraid. What do you see? I see a spirit form coming up out of the earth’, the woman answered. Then Saul asked her, ‘what does he look like?’ And she replied, ‘An old man wearing a robe is coming up’. Then Saul knew that it was Samuel...”



Spirit form: elohiym (one of the “gods”)

Vs. 8 Saul asked the woman to consult a “spirit” for him – aob (familiar spirit, wineskin of bottle, the shell of a man)

Hard topics: Eschatology - Death

Matthew 22:31

“Now concerning the resurrection of the dead, haven't you read what was spoken to you by God? 'I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' He is not the God of the **dead**, but of the living.”

Dead = nekros

Zao = breath of life



Hard topics: Eschatology - Death

SHEOL – The Underworld. Interim state

Matthew 6:19

“Don’t collect for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But collect for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves don’t break in and steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.”

Hard topics: Eschatology - Resurrection

Old Testament

Daniel 12:2

“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life and some to shame and eternal contempt.”

1 Samuel 2:6 song of Hannah

“Yahweh kills and brings to life; he brings down to sheol and raises up.”

Hard topics: Eschatology - Resurrection

John 5:28-29

“a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come out – those who have done good things to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things to the resurrection of judgment.”

John 11:24 Death of Lazarus

“Martha said, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day’. Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies will live’. “

Hard topics: Eschatology - Judgement

Revelation 20: 11,12

“Then I saw a great white throne and one seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence and no place was found in him.

I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books.”



VIEWS OF HELL: Universalism

1 Corinthians 15:22

“For as in Adam, so also in Christ all will be made alive”

Philippians 2:10-11

“...at the name of Jesus every knee will bow of those who are in heaven, and on the earth and under the earth – and every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the father.”

God is all – love

God is all-powerful

Jesus died for all (the debt is paid)

God wants all to be saved

therefore, ALL WILL BE SAVED AND IN HEAVEN





VIEWS OF HELL: Universalism

PROBLEMS:

1. Far more scripture points to judgement consequences. Jesus – 7x in John uses the phrase, “weeping and gnashing of teeth”.
2. To want all, pay for all, and be able to save all does not mean all are saved.
3. Freedom. Will God force all to accept Jesus? If so, then why not in the garden before all this mess? Why sacrifice Jesus?
4. God isn't being fair argument.

Overestimate man's ignorance.

Underestimate God's work with man.

VIEWS OF HELL: Purgatory

1. Not for those who rejected God (there still is hell).
2. Purgatory is a step before heaven
3. Purgatory is for: “satisfaction”, “purification”.

We are saved by Christ but from that moment are responsible (with the help God provides) for:

- (a) Paying the price for sins committed after conversion
- (b) Holiness, becoming fully developed followers, “purification”

Hope for those unsanctified Christians. Not quite heaven but not hell.



VIEWS OF HELL: Purgatory

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

“¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.¹² If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. ¹⁴ If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames (purgatory).”

Other, Philippians 2:12 “work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”v



WOLFF VON FROBENIUS
Die Heiligen in der Purgatorien
1880

VIEWS OF HELL: Purgatory

PROBLEMS

1. Not a lot of direct scripture. Mostly “inferred” by Jesus and Paul.
2. Philosophical concept whose origins are rooted in some bad Catholic history, i.e. “buying your way to heaven”
3. When is purgatory? Judgment is heaven or hell. There is no third option. “Behold I make all things new...” is it “sheol”, the time from death to resurrection?
4. God isn't being fair argument.
 - Overestimate man's ignorance.
 - Underestimate God's work with man.



APPROXIMATE PROPORTION
The figures are shown in the same proportion as the original work.

VIEWS OF HELL:

eternal conscious punishment

Three characteristics of all descriptions of hell:

1. Final separation from God
2. Unending experience (aionos=everlasting)
3. Retribution. You pay the price for what you have done.
Since God is infinite, the payment is infinite.

Isaiah 66:24

“They (those entering the new heaven and the new earth) will see the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me; for the worm will never die, their fire will never go out, and there will be a horror to all mankind.”



VIEWS OF HELL:

eternal conscious punishment

Jesus passages of condemnation

Matthew 8:12

“But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness, in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 22:13

“Then the king said to the servants, ‘bind him, hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth’.”

Matthew 25:30

“Throw out the worthless slave into the darkness, in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Conscious = alive and suffering

Hell or purgatory – “sons”, “servants”, “slaves”

VIEWS OF HELL: eternal conscious punishment

Revelation 14:9-11

“⁹ A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, ¹⁰ they, too, will drink the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”

VIEWS OF HELL:

eternal conscious punishment

PROBLEMS

1. The vast majority of the passages that apply post judgement do not need to be seen as everlasting or conscious.
2. The clear passages that point to conscious torment are reserved for the beast, Satan, false Christ and those who bear the mark. It is not clear that it will be everlasting.
3. Retribution. Christ has paid the full price for our sins.
4. Eternal conscious torment...seems out of character with God's character.
5. All things new...except a prison of ongoing torture..???

VIEWS OF HELL: eternal conscious punishment

DEAD MEANS DEAD

- Perish
- Destroyed
- gone



VIEWS OF HELL:

Terminal punishment (annihilationism)

Some scripture verses but different interpretations.

1. Aion: everlasting or next age, can speak to a quality of not “time”
2. Everlasting death/destruction: not that the death or destruction go on forever but the death itself is forever
3. Consuming fire: “unquenchable”, not going on forever but unquenchable and won’t stop burning until all is gone.
4. Worm does not die: not that the worm does its job but you don’t die, the worm keeps devouring until you are gone.

VIEWS OF HELL:

Terminal punishment (annihilationism)

PROBLEMS

1. Scriptural interpretation
2. The soul is immortal and cannot be destroyed
3. Justice is not satisfied. Individuals should be punished for the evil that they have done.
4. It is what we always believed (tradition).

Hard topics: The big picture



Genesis 1

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

1st day: light

2nd day: sky

3rd day: earth and sea, vegetation/plants → good

4th day: moon and the stars → good

5th day: creature of the sea, birds of the air → good

6th day: wildlife of the earth → good

Hard topics: The big picture

Genesis 1:26

“Then God said, ‘let us make man in our image, according to our likeness ...

vs. 27 ... so God created man in his own image. He created them in the image of God. He created them male and female.

vs. 28 ...God **blessed** them

vs. 31 ...God saw all that he had made, and it was **very good.**”



Hard topics: The big picture

Genesis 3 – the temptation

“The serpent said,

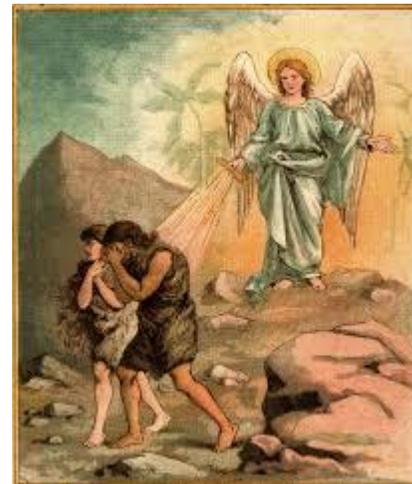
(a) Did God really say, you can't eat from any tree in the garden?

(b) God knows that when you eat from it (tree of knowledge) that your eyes will be opened and you will be like God.”

A. We doubted/rejected God's love for us

- He is withholding
- He is not looking out for our best
- He is not good or loving

B. Desire to be God = envy



Hard topics: The big picture

Genesis 3 – the fall

vs. 6, “we ate...

vs. 7 ...our eyes were opened and we saw our nakedness...

vs. 8 we hid...”

Disobedience

Shame

Separation from God

Hard topics: The big picture

EMERGENCY CARE: Stop the bleeding

Genesis 3:22

“The Lord God said, ‘since man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat and live forever’; so the Lord God sent him away from the garden of eden...”

The Rescue

- A. Maintenance of God's presence on earth
 - (a) Chosen people
 - (b) The law
 - (c) The prophets
 - (d) God's visitations

B. The Messiah

Isaiah 53: 5-6

“But he was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities. Punishment for our peace was on him and we are healed by his wounds.”



John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

- A. Can you accept his sacrifice for you? Gratitude?
- B. Is this enough proof of his goodness and love? Entrust him with your life?
- C. Can you be his creation? Bend your knee and submit?



Hard topics: The big picture

The new creature

Revelation 21:1-5

“Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,”^[a] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’^[b] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

HEAVEN

Revelation 2:7

“Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the spirit says to the churches. I will give the victor the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in God’s paradise (garden).”

Revelation 22

“Then he showed me the river of living water, sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the broad street of the city. The tree of life was on both sides of the river, bearing 12 kinds of fruit...

vs. 14 blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.”

HELL

Revelation 2:11

“Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the spirit says to the churches. The victor will never be harmed by the second death.”

Revelation 20:14

“Death and Hades were thrown in the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.”

