

ETERNAL JUDGEMENT

Victor Hall, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 7 August 2022

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Introduction

Good morning, everyone. A few days before the recent Teens camp, the Lord gave me a word for teenagers. I then realised that we have not actually talked much about eternal judgement and the whole concept of hell.

I began to think back and, to be frank, the last person I ever heard preaching on this with any real fervour was Billy Graham. For us as a church, it has been a long time since we touched on this subject.

This then became a central feature of my discussions with those who were teaching and speaking at the recent teen camp on the subject of 'The fear of the Lord'. I will ask you all to stay with me as I cover this subject today, particularly the teenagers and Sonseekers.

The reality of judgement and hell

In this next section, we will talk about how Jesus, while still on the cross, was forgotten by God 'for a little while'.

In every one of the psalms, Jesus quoted Himself, concerning His 'not being left in hell'. He then spoke to us about how we need to *fear Him*.

The book of Matthew, which speaks about the kingship of Christ, also has much to say about the judgement of God, the wrath of God, and Jesus who is our Judge - the One who puts men and women into hell.

As well as Christ being our Saviour, there is a judgement seat; there is also a great white throne; there is also a hell; and also, an eternal lake of fire.

The fulfilment of all things in Christ

We will look, first of all, at how Jesus fulfilled 'all things'.

'Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour [that is twelve midday until three in the afternoon.], 'there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*", that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

'Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!"

Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge and filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him".

'And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His Spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.'

Note that statement - 'bodies of the saints'.

Those who truly believed 'were raised from the dead and came out of the graves, after His resurrection and they went into the holy city and appeared to many.'

'So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"' Mat 27:45-54.

Those who have rejected Christ forgotten

I will begin to read what I have written down. God has already contained, constrained and judged, put to death, and forgotten, in Christ, all those who have rejected and forgotten Him. He has already done that *in Christ*.

God has already contained, constrained, judged and put to death and forgotten, in Christ, all those who have rejected and forgotten God. I will include two passages which illustrate this truth.

'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations who forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish.' Psa 9:17.

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations who forget God!

'God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Now He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe he is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.' Joh 3:17-18.

The judgement that we deserved fell on Him

'The wicked shall be turned [on their journey through life] into hell, and all those who forget God.' For those who have died with Christ and have voluntarily joined His offering and faith, God has remembered us and has brought us back from this death with Christ.

Remember that, on the cross, between twelve midday and three in the afternoon, Jesus had become the embodiment of the sin and rebellion of all men. Thus, the judgement and wrath of God, which we deserved, fell upon Him, and He went down into hell where He was forgotten by God. As a consequence, the whole of the human race was taken away and forgotten by God, in Christ.

Christ bore the judgement of 'all mankind'

In other words, Jesus Christ bore the judgement of all of mankind; not only of those who believed.

I will labour this point, because there are teachings in the broader Christian religion which suggest that Jesus died and suffered only the judgement and punishment of those who would believe.

And then, on the basis of that judgement which He bore for them, God then offered forgiveness. The rest of them, He confined to hell and foreordained that this would be their judgement. This, however, is not the case.

Christ suffered and, as He went out, He became the full embodiment of the sin of all of mankind. The outcome of this action is, 'whosoever will, may come'. The invitation is open to all men.

Our invitation to choose His calling

God knows what our choices will be. This is a new thought for many of us, isn't it? This is an amazing thought.

We now begin to extrapolate backwards to the realm 'before', when we see Christ, the Lamb, slain before the foundation of the world. When we begin to look at all of this and see how complete and absolute was the predestination of God for all men, we suddenly become aware how total and absolute was His salvation.

When we begin to look at the fullness of this, we realise that there was nothing partial. He, who began it all, cut everything free so that man could have the freedom to choose. Despite this offer of 'so great salvation', the fact remains that Adam

rebelled, and a great multitude, throughout history, have turned their back on God and have walked away from Him, having not chosen.

The polarisation of the word against the unjust

The more that the word comes, the more it polarises mankind against God and against the word of life, until they finally gnash with their teeth, having rejected Him.

He picked it all up, however; the whole reality of it; the responsibility of it; the accountability of it; and He made an atonement for all men.

Christ then picked up the judgement of all men. He went out in judgement with it and was forsaken by God. He did this by the power of Eternal Spirit.

To broaden this thought, it is very important that we look at the doctrine of God's judgement here; how Christ was fully involved for all men, and on behalf of all men. He then suffered the full wrath of that judgement and bore the sins of many.

Thus, He bore *our* sin. He not only bore our sin, however. He bore the sins of those who would not accept His salvation. As a result, everyone – we all – went out in judgement with Him. Then, however, He came back by way of resurrection life.

Hell could not hold Christ

At a personal level, Christ had not sinned, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. As well, He, in obedience to God who had become His Father, became a sin offering for all mankind. Hell, therefore, could not hold Him.

Throughout this process, the Father forgot Him only for 'a little while' until He, through Eternal Spirit, accomplished eternal judgement within Himself.

He accomplished eternal judgement, not only for the believer, but also for the unbeliever. This was an everlasting damnation which He endured for all men. He was able to do this by Eternal Spirit, and then to step out of the eternal dimension in which man is, that has rejected God in hell, and to bring forth, from there, everlasting life.

The Father forgot Him, only for a little while, until He, through Eternal Spirit, accomplished eternal judgement. Note this – through Eternal Spirit, He accomplished eternal judgement within

Himself as He died our death upon the cross. Christ suffered the judgement of everlasting burnings, by the power of Eternal Spirit, until our judgement and punishment were complete in Him.

The efficacy of the two goats fulfilled in Christ's one offering

This He did as *the scapegoat*. As the scapegoat, He was taken out, bearing our sin, and was forgotten by God.

Within the parameters of His offering, Christ was also *the Lord's goat*. As the Lord's goat, He was also a sin offering. As the Lord's goat, He accomplished eternal redemption for us.

Thus, He was able to bring us back from the death of sin, ridding us of our rebellion and disobedience, and enabling us to leave it behind in the place where He took us – we left it in the bottom of hell.

He left all sin and all rebellion behind, and He came back fulfilling our obedience. All of our works, He has worked for us, and He has joined us to the fellowship of His offering.

Every day, therefore, our works are being worked, as we stay in fellowship with Him.

Our sin and disobedience constrained in hell

Our sin and disobedience were left constrained in hell.

I worked a long time on this thought and discussed it with one or two others also. The question was, should we say 'destroyed' in hell or 'constrained' in hell? The words 'constrained' and 'destroyed' carry the same meaning (once sin and disobedience are locked up and forgotten by God). In this sense, however, I prefer the use of 'constrained', as it conveys that sin and disobedience can never emerge again.

As we continue in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, we are being progressively delivered from sin and disobedience; they are progressively being circumscribed from our hearts.

The fact remains, they are already constrained and destroyed because, in those three hours on the cross, He accomplished the fulfilment, totally and absolutely, of everything that it means to be forgotten by God. They are eternally judged within an eternity of judgement, wrath and fire, which He endured on our account.

'A little while' – three hours of eternal judgement

Let's now look at this term, 'a little while'. It is truly amazing that, in three hours of our time He, through Eternal Spirit, endured an eternity of judgement and wrath, an ageless age of years, countless and interminable.

This period will never cease for those who have not and did not repent; then move past 'the use-by' date of entering in; and then will be turned into hell. It is a frightening thought.

'You have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord has said to Me, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You".' Psa 2:6-7.

Christ is speaking in this Messianic Psalm.

'I declare the decree: the Lord has said to Me, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are those who put their trust in Him.'" Psa 2:7-12.

This passage refers to the Son, whose wrath was stirred 'but a little'. He warned the kings of the earth, and particularly warns us about the time when the Father will take His seat.

'When you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.' Psa 2:12.

The choice between eternal damnation and salvation

As we read this verse, we can look at the two thieves on the cross on each side of Christ. One went into everlasting burnings, while the other also joined Christ in everlasting burnings. One, however, was saved; and the other perished for eternity.

'Therefore says the Lord God of hosts: "O My people, who dwell in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of Egypt. For yet a little while and the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction." And

the Lord of hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; as His rod was on the sea, so He will lift it up in the manner of Egypt.' Isa 10:25-26.

This refers to our *deliverance* when His indignation is stirred up just a little.

We will consider Zechariah 1:15, as well. 'The angel who spoke with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I am zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal. I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease; for I was *a little angry*, and they helped – but with evil intent." Thus says the Lord: "I am returning to Jerusalem with *mercy*".'

This Scripture connects with the point that I am highlighting – that when Christ hung on the cross, the Father's anger was stirred 'but a little', or for 'a little season'. The Father was angry and forgot the Son there for a little while – from midday until three o'clock.

In this *little season* in which, through Eternal Spirit, the Son suffered the *judgement* of the whole of the human race, He went to the very 'bottom of the mountains'. Jon 2:6. He went and suffered, for an eternity, all of our judgement.

We see here the mocking of the scribes and the Pharisees and the people; the wagging of their heads; the crucifixion of Jesus.

Then we see the Father forsaking Him at midday, until three o'clock. During that time, He worked, in that judgement, an eternal redemption for us.

The Father forgot Him for only a little while, until He, through Eternal Spirit, accomplished eternal judgement within Himself, as He died our death upon the cross. Christ suffered the judgement of everlasting burnings, by the power of Eternal Spirit, until our judgement and punishment were complete in Him.

I love the thought that for *just a little season*, this wrath was stirred; but it was *eternal* judgement, and it was *everlasting* wrath.

Christ's experience of our eternal judgement revealed in the psalms

We will now turn to Psalm 88. This is a psalm of Korah. It is also a Messianic psalm.

'O Lord, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You. Let my prayer come before

You; incline Your ear to my cry. For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to the grave. I am counted with those who go down to the pit; I am like a man who has no strength, adrift among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom You remember no more, and who are cut off from Your [land] hand. This is 'from the land of the living'. Isa 53:8.

'You have laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the depths. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves. You have put away my acquaintances far from me; You have made me an abomination to them; I am shut up, and *I cannot get out*; my eye wastes away because of affliction.

'Lord, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You. Will You work wonders for the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You? Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?' Psa 88:1-12.

Isn't that an amazing psalm? And doesn't that wonderfully tell us what Jesus endured from midday until three o'clock?

Then He finally cried out, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' Mat 27:46.

These are all psalms, or prophetic words, or confessions, of Christ Himself as He endured eternal wrath upon the cross.

'For You will not leave My soul in hell, nor will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption.' Psa 16:10.

'The sorrows of hell compassed Me about; the snares of death confronted Me.' Psa 18:5.

'The pains of Sheol got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.' Psa 116:3.

'You have delivered My soul from the lowest hell.' Psa 86:13.

'If I make My bed in hell, behold, Thou art there.' Psa 139:8.

Jesus' death, burial and resurrection given as a sign to every generation

In the book of Jonah, Jesus referred to this chapter when He spoke of 'the sign of the prophet Jonah'.

‘As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’ Mat 12:39-40.

Jesus was declaring that ‘the sign of the prophet Jonah’ is the death, and the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which would be given to every evil and adulterous generation as a sign. Mat 12:39.

If we receive and believe this sign, we can be saved.

Jesus’ prayer in the three hours of darkness revealed in Jonah’s prayer

‘The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish’s belly.’ Jon 1:17-2:1.

This was the prayer of Jesus on the cross, *until His suffering was complete.*

‘And he said: “I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of hell I cried, and You heard my voice. For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods surrounded me; all Your billows and Your waves passed over me.”’ Jon 2:2-3.

This sounds like the psalm of Korah, doesn’t it? ‘All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.’

‘Then I said, “I have been cast out of Your sight [That means that I have been *forsaken* by God; I have been *forgotten* by God]; yet I will look again toward Your holy temple”.

‘The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; the deep closed around me; weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever [everlasting – ‘forever’]; yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple.’ Jon 2:4-6.

Then the Lord sent and drew him out of many waters, *as He drew Christ out of many waters.*

The sea of God’s forgetfulness

Another Scripture that echoes Jonah’s description of God’s judgement as being ‘cast into the deep, into the heart of the seas’ is found in the book of Micah.

Speaking about God, who ‘pardons iniquity, passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage’, Micah declared, ‘He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will *cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*’ Mic 7:18-19.

That is a great thought. We are returning here to the understanding that our sins are *retained and held and destroyed; cast into the depths of His sea.*

I searched to see if we could find the expression, ‘the sea of God’s forgetfulness’, in the Scriptures. I think the expression is actually drawn from the song of the hymn writer.

It is actually the combining of verses from the book of Micah and Psalm 88.

‘You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old.’ Mic 7:19-20.

‘Shall your righteousness be made known in the land of forgetfulness?’ Psa 88:12.

So, with the hymn writer, we have coined the expression ‘the sea of God’s forgetfulness’.

He has cast all of your sin and all of your iniquities into the sea of God’s forgetfulness, and there they are constrained; forever held, forever judged.

The eternal corruption and judgement of those who have rejected God’s salvation

Come with me now to Isaiah Chapter 66, which refers to the new heavens and the new earth.

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the Lord, “So shall your descendants and your name remain ... all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord.

“And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”’ Isa 66:22,24.

Although God has forgotten those who have rebelled against His word, have rejected His salvation, and have gone into hell and then into the lake of fire, there is resurrection at the end of the millennium.

This is the *resurrection of mortality*, where the spirit and the soul of those who are in hell are brought up and put back into their body – the physical, corrupting body of the damned.

Understand this! Their soul has departed into hell, and there is a corpse. It has begun its corruption. Then there is *resurrection to damnation*. That corpse is brought back, and the spirit and the soul re-enter that corpse.

That body, alive, but now corrupting as a corpse, goes, for eternity, into the lake of fire, and the fire of God burns upon its corruption. Its corruption increases, and the fire of God, which is against sin and corruption, burns upon it.

‘They shall ... look upon the corpses of the men ... whose worm does not die.’ This means that their *corruption continues*; and the fire burns against their corruption. They are ‘an abhorrence to all flesh’.

They are maintained for eternity, contained in their corruption and in their evil, in everlasting, increasing torment.

How many want to go into the lake of fire? Think on that, those who mock it.

This is the eternal, everlasting increase of pain and judgement and wrath that is containing and holding forever. And men shall look upon the corpses as an everlasting remembrance of this; and they will be an abhorrence to all men for the whole of eternity.

Reverence and godly fear

Do you know why we have not preached on this? It is because many Christians cannot contain it and will not accept it – but it is Scripture.

This all leads us to a *fear of God*.

Jesus said, ‘Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.’ Mat 10:28.

The good news is that we will all have to *live with everlasting burnings* – because ‘our God is a consuming fire’. Heb 12:29.

The coming wrath of God

We will read from Isaiah Chapter 33.

This is the Lord speaking, from the time that the Father takes His seat. This will be not too far ahead of us – when the kingdom of the Father comes and we begin to see a third of the nations, under the seals, falling straight into hell.

It will be an horrendous sight to watch. Can you imagine a third of the nations, under the fourth horseman, dropping straight into hell?

The wrath of God is coming. These are the days of vengeance that are ahead of us.

‘“Now I will arise,” says the Lord; ‘now I will be exalted, now I will lift Myself up. You shall conceive chaff, you shall bring forth stubble; your breath, as fire, shall devour you. And the people shall be like the burnings of lime; like thorns cut up they shall be burned in the fire.

‘Hear, you who are afar off, what I have done; and you who are near, acknowledge My might.’”

‘The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: he will dwell on high; his place of defence will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure.’ Isa 33:10-16.

Salvation or damnation

This is what happened to the thief on the cross, who became *bankrupt in spirit*.

With his friend, he joined Christ on the cross. At first, to them both, the cross was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - they began to mock and rebuke and rail on Christ.

However, one found bankruptcy in spirit, and began to ‘dwell with Christ in everlasting burnings’. As a result, all that happened to him in that pain, was that it *purged from him the stubble* of his own attitudes as a zealot. He became bankrupt and meek. Then, he was raised up on high with Christ into ‘the fortress’ that Christ finally went to – ‘today you will be with Me in Paradise’. Luk 23:43.

The other thief went with him until midday. Then, as Christ departed to heaven, he, by the end of that day, had his legs broken, and went down into the burnings of hell.

There, he is tormented in that flame, awaiting the resurrection, when that corpse that died on the cross will be brought back to life in a mortal resurrection, with all of its wounds and its pain.

His spirit, then, imprisoned in that body, will continue forever, in the lake of fire.

That is what will happen to that other thief.

This is the story of *salvation or damnation*. This is the story of *heaven or hell*.

Our God is a consuming fire – a call to response

We have been offered an amazing gospel!

It is not how we *began* our race that guarantees heaven for us. It is how we *finish* our race.

How many are challenged by this today?

We have to run our homes in a *sanctified* way. Many of us have been lax with that, and we are now eating the fruit of that way.

The Lord is asking us to recognise that *our God is a consuming fire*.

I suggest that, this week, you look through the Scriptures, and focus a little on the other way – look at *the wrath of God*; look at *the judgement of God*; and look at *the fire of God*.

We have to become accustomed to, and comfortable with, the fact that He baptised us with the Holy Ghost *and with fire*. His fan is in His hand, and He is *thoroughly purging our life* from the stubble. He will burn our ‘chaff’ with unquenchable fire. Mat 3:12.

But He is *purifying* us with the same fire, and will bring us forth *as gold*. 1Pe 1:7. Rev 3:18. Job 23:10.

Concluding prayer

‘Lord, we thank You for Your word today.

You have been confronting us with this amazing word – a word for our teenagers, for our young adults; but also, a word for the whole congregation.

It is a word for the whole body of Christ; for, Lord, You are coming to judge the earth.

And You will judge with righteousness. You will judge the nations with Your truth. Psa 96:13. And when Your judgements are in the earth, the nations will learn righteousness. Isa 26:9.

You will bring forth, into Your redemption, a company that no man can number and, in this, Lord, we do rejoice. Rev 7:9.

For, Lord, we see that You are doing it in our lives ,and You are saving us. You are purifying our lives and You are bringing us forth as gold.

We pray that, as we meditate together, fellowship together, as we eat and drink together, there will be blessing and grace upon each one, as we share in Your word.’