

FLEE FROM THE WRATH TO COME

Scripture Portion: Luke 16:19-31

Just as there is heaven for the children of God, there is hell for sinners. The Psalmist says, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?" (Psa.90: 11). The wrath of God is reserved for all sinners. This subject fills my heart with sorrow, but it is my duty to warn the readers about the great punishment that awaits sinners. Both curse as well as blessing come from God. Jesus blessed His disciples before leaving this world, but the last thing in His second coming will be to drive the sinners away from His presence. Just as the love of God the Father planned everlasting blessedness, so the justice of God prepared everlasting punishment for sinners. The Spirit of God brought thousands of souls to salvation (Acts 2:41), because they repented of their sins. If a sinner turns away from the grace of God, then what will happen to him? The Word of God is very clear. The Lord Jesus said, "...these will go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt.25: 46). The curse for breaking God's laws rests upon every person. If a man does not repent of his sins, he must depart from God with an unrepentant heart.

Several facts about hell are revealed in the Bible. The Word of God tells more about hell than about heaven. The reason why the Lord of glory tells about hell is very clear. For those who are born of the Spirit of God, their way to heaven is clear. Their feet are set on a narrow path. They are on the King's highway. The way of holiness is filled with divine life. But the way to hell is dark and dangerous. That is why there are many warnings in the Word of God. Hell was not in God's original plan. He had no intention of creating hell. The Word of God says in Gen.1: 1, "God created the heaven and the earth". There is no mention of hell there. In God's original plan, He had no place for hell. However, when there was rebellion among the angels of God, those angels who fell by reason of pride, became demons. God prepared hell for the Devil and his fallen angels (Matt.25: 41). Later on, man under the influence of the Devil, rebelled against the Creator, became proud and fell in sin. Then God resolved that wicked men also should have a portion in hell. Man's crimes, -pride, uncleanness, rebellion are the same as the Devil's. In every country there are jails. When men break the laws of the Government they are put in the jail. In the same way, God puts those who break His laws in hell. God never intended this for man. His original intention was that man should be perfect, and live forever with God in heaven. When man sinned, God's eternal laws were broken. Yet He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to atone for man's sins. He shed His precious blood and died upon the cross to save man from the punishment of hell. By various means God gives the message of salvation to mankind. The pardon for sins and the gift of eternal life are offered to man. But when he refuses God's love and His way of salvation and tramples under his feet the precious blood of Christ, God has no alternative; He must send him to the prison of hell as a law -breaker.

The Bible tells us that in hell there is everlasting fire. Behind the city of Jerusalem, there was a place where all the garbage was thrown. Some times when criminals were executed, their bodies were thrown into that pit as a mark of shame. In that place fire burned all the time. The Lord used that as an illustration when He said, "...cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:45). But in heaven there is happiness; there are treasures of joy, times of feasting and rest, all the bliss of Paradise. The everlasting fire of hell is not the fire that we know of. The fire of hell burns in the spirit, in the tender sensitive part of man, in his spirit. Hell is

also described as outer darkness (Matt.8: 12), where there is no spiritual knowledge, no prophet of God, no Word of God. We read in God's Word that God is light. But in hell there is darkness. There is no Spirit of God, no love or compassion of God; nothing of God is there; only outer darkness. Hell is also called the bottomless pit (Rev.9: 1). There, man goes lower and lower in moral condition. Hell has no bottom. Throughout eternity, every day, sinners become more and more sinful. Here on earth there are many influences to stop you from going into darkness. In hell there is nothing. The Spirit of God and the Word of God keep you from darkness. In hell you cannot improve your condition. You sink lower and lower every day. The Bible also tells us that hell is a wine -press (Rev.14: 19). In the winepress grapes are crushed to get juice. In hell sinners will be pressed and broken under the wrath of God. Also the Bible calls hell the second death (Rev.20: 14). The second death is the banishment of a soul from the presence of God. Dear reader, pay heed at least now to the Word of God. Hell is outer darkness, bottomless pit, God's winepress, and second death. Oh sinner, flee from it.

Now let me tell you about the suffering in hell. The first great suffering is, to be driven away from the presence of God. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). If you reject the Lord Jesus, there is no other way to the Father. The way is blocked. There is a great gulf between the Father and yourself. If you reject the Way, there is no other way. You can never see His glorious face. You can never feel His presence. Even though now you may receive some blessing from God, you will be separated from Him for eternity. That separation is final.

Secondly, in hell there is not a single good thing. Satan has nothing good to give you. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1: 17). God is the giver of every good thing. When you are separated from God, every good thing is gone. When the sun goes down, all the light is gone. When God departs from you, every grace departs from you. There is no strength for your weakness, no rest for the weariness of your soul. Every good thing about which you are hearing now, you will never hear in hell. There is no Savior to save you, no joy and no peace to be found in hell.

Thirdly, you will remember all the lost opportunities. "But Abraham said, Son, remember..." (Luke 16:25). You will remember how you refused the salvation, even after hearing the Word of God; how God spoke to you, and how you refused to receive the grace of the Savior. From eternity to eternity you will remember how you refused the Son of God.

Finally, the Bible tells us that the sufferings of hell are forever and ever. Here upon the earth, you may have sorrow today and joy tomorrow. In hell, the wrath of God remains forever and ever. Criminals who refuse salvation which God offers in His grace will be tormented forever and ever. This is the end of the sinner's journey. Reader, turn, turn, why will you die in your sins? God is warning you that there is a dark and dangerous place, reserved for sinners. He is giving you warning after warning to flee from the wrath to come. Flee to the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is the refuge from the wrath. To escape from divine wrath hide yourself in Jesus. Believe on the Lord Jesus, you will be saved from the wrath of God. If God has spoken to you, flee to Christ. Believe that He died for you on the cross, to bear the penalty of your sins, and rose again from the dead. Repent of your sins, come to Him and ask for full forgiveness. He will save you from the wrath of God. D.S.