

After Life - Adult SS - Lesson 2: Hell

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[0 : 00] Thank you for another minute.

Thank you.

Let me pray to begin. Lord God, we praise you that you have not left us in darkness, but you have spoken to us.

You have revealed the things of the future to us and that we can know that our destiny is safe in Christ. As we consider these weighty things today, help us to take them in soberly and help us to all the more trust in the Lord Jesus.

And in his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. So if you weren't here last week, this series is called Afterlife. And so this term we're following the journey of a soul after the point of death.

[1 : 49] So here's a bit of our diagram. So Harry, in our first week, he showed us that this is our life now, this life, and that's the point of death. We're then going to follow a soul through this timeline and see what happens after death.

I just found a ping pong ball in my pocket. Being a dad's all about. And we need to know that there is a life after this life.

There is an afterlife. That's why this series is called Afterlife. And we're going to find out this term exactly what that afterlife is. So last week we followed a believer's soul into heaven, didn't we?

And I said last week that this week we're going to do the resurrection. I actually want to do that next week. So we've got a bit of a change of plan today. Today I want to follow an unbeliever's soul after death into hell.

And I want to cover these two states first. So the intermediate state. This state first. I want to cover all of this and then we'll move on to the final state.

[3 : 03] But this week we're going to be following an unbeliever's soul into hell. And as we do this we're going to be looking both at the intermediate and the final state.

And you'll see why in a bit. And then next week we'll look at the final state of the believer. And then we'll go back and have a look at this little in-between point. Like how do we transition from the intermediate state and this age into the next stage and the final state.

So we'll kind of go left and then right and then into the middle. But today we're going to be looking at hell. And I need to say that this is not an easy topic.

This isn't a nice topic to think about is it. But it is a necessary one. The Bible does not shy away from hell. Jesus mentions hell a lot.

In fact hell is one of the key doctrines that the early church taught on. In Hebrews 6 the author of Hebrews. He mentions what he says are the foundational elementary doctrines of Christ.

[4 : 12] So he kind of lays out the basic Christianity explored for the first century. In the book of Hebrews. And it's really interesting. It's interesting what he mentions as those foundational topics.

I wonder what you would say. He says these four things. Repentance and faith. Baptism. The resurrection. And eternal judgment. So if the apostles were to run a membership class.

Hell would have been one of the first things to cover. And so this is key for us to know. And it's key because Christ came to save us from something.

The son of God came down from heaven. Took on flesh for a big reason. To save us from something. And so we need to know what that something is.

Grace can only be really appreciated when it's in contrast to judgment. And so we need to know about hell. So we can know about how great a salvation we have. And so let's make sure that we take this foundational doctrine in.

[5 : 21] And just like heaven. There's something that we first need to know about hell. And it's this. This is my first point. You can follow along in your handout. Hell is a real place in creation.

The Bible gives a lot of vivid language about hell. And eternal. Uses the language of eternal punishment. And fire. Lake of sulfur. But there's one particular passage that gives us maybe the clearest glimpse into hell.

And it's Luke 16. It's the rich man in Lazarus. So I want you to turn there now. Luke 16. Verse 19 to 31. So page 876 of the church Bibles if you have one.

Luke 16. And I want us to look at this passage as kind of a key starting point. And then we'll kind of look at other passages as we go.

We'll kind of build from here a fuller and fuller picture of hell. So Luke 16. Starting verse 19. Now before I read this. We need to note that this is a parable in a sense.

[6 : 29] Jesus is teaching about the danger of rejecting the gospel and the urgency of believing. And so Lazarus and the rich man. They may not be real people that Jesus knew.

Maybe they were. So yes it is a parable. But that doesn't mean that the reality of hell that he is teaching about isn't real.

So Jesus gives parables all the time about seeds and fish and widows and weddings. But that doesn't mean that weddings aren't real.

Or that's not a proper depiction of a wedding. No. He uses those realities in parables to tell.

Because they are real. And he teaches truths from them.

And so as we glimpse into hell here. Jesus is telling us real things about hell. And so let's read it. Luke chapter 16. Starting verse 19.

[7 : 29] There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen. And who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus. Covered with sores.

Who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side.

The rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades being in torment. He lifted up his eyes. And saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

And he called out. Father Abraham have mercy on me. And send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water. And call my tongue. For I am in anguish.

And in. For I am in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said. Child. Remember that you in your lifetime received your good things. And Lazarus in like manner bad things.

[8 : 25] But now he is comforted here. And you are in anguish. And besides all this. Between us and you. A great chasm has been fixed. In order that those who would pass from here to you.

May not do so. And none may cross from there to us. And he said. Then I beg you father. To send him to my father's house. For I have five brothers.

So that he may warn them. Lest they also come into this place of torment. But Abraham said. They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.

And he said. No father Abraham. But if someone goes to them from the dead. They will repent. He said to him. If they do not hear Moses. And the prophets. Neither will they be convinced.

If someone should rise from the dead. There is a lot to see here. But the first is this. Hell. Is a real place in creation.

[9 : 22] So look at verse 28. It is called. A place of torment. Hell is a place. An actual location. Within creation.

Where the rich man's soul. Goes to after death. And look how Jesus speaks in Matthew 28. I've got it written there for you. Fear him who can destroy both soul and body.

In hell. Hell is a place where bodies and souls can go to. And if bodies can go there. It must have dimensions.

Height and width and depth. It's a place in creation. And since God created all things. And since everything that is not God.

Is in creation. Then all things. This means all things. This means hell. Is a place in creation.

[10 : 18] And God created it. So. Remember this. If God created all things.

Anything that is not God. Is here in creation. Then hell must be in creation. And God created it. So. The devil didn't create it.

In fact. It is a place. Prepared by God. For the devil. In the final state. So. Look at Matthew 25.

These are Jesus' words. He calls it. The eternal fire.

Prepared for the devil. And his angels. But. But we don't know where it is in creation. There's no kind of impression. That it's within this universe. So you can travel to there.

On a. It's not on like a planet. Or a moon. You can go there on a spaceship. There's no suggestion. That it's even. You know. Down in the core of the earth. Where it's hot there. No.

[11:17] It's probably more like heaven. That we saw last week. So it's kind of a. Remember. Don't go too sci-fi with this. But it's. It's a different dimension. A different realm.

Outside. And beyond this visible universe. And people can go there. After death. So. So just like heaven. You think of.

Hell. It's. It's within creation. It's kind of like a. A different region. A different realm. Or dimension of creation. And so hell is real.

It's not a state of mind. It's not something kind of metaphorical. It is a real location. In creation. Hell. And just a side note here.

On the different names. We might come across in the Bible. Like Sheol. Or Hades. And hell. Which the real name for that in Greek. Is Gehenna. And I have to be quick here.

[12:15] But I kind of want to give you. Just a quick overview. Of these names. So. So when you see Sheol. Or Hades. It can mean two things. So Sheol and Hades. Kind of lump them together. Sheol and Hades.

They're interchangeable. Okay. Sheol and Hades. It can either mean. Just death. In a general sense. Just being in the state of dying. Whether it's believer or unbeliever.

Just being dead. Or. Sheol and Hades. When it's referring to a place. For the ungodly. It refers to hell. So. 1 Samuel 26.

Says. The Lord kills and brings to life. He brings down to Sheol. And raises up. So. Killing. Dying. And going down to Sheol.

Is just the same thing. It's just talking about anyone who dies. It's the same with Acts 2. 27. With Hades. And so. Sheol and Hades. Can just mean being dead. For the believer or unbeliever.

[13:11] And that's why. The language of going down to Sheol. Or going down to Hades. Is used. It's. It's not because the afterlife. Is downwards. In the core of the earth somewhere. No. It's because. Graves are downwards.

It's just kind of poetic language. Talking about the state of death. But when Sheol or Hades. Refers to a location. Where the ungodly go. It's talking about hell.

So. Deuteronomy 32. For a fire is kindled by my anger. And it burns. To the depths of Sheol. And so. With Sheol and Hades.

In summary. You just need to be careful. With how it's being used. Just really look at the context. It can either mean death. Or it can mean hell. But the word hell. When you see hell.

That means hell. So. So the word hell in Greek. The word is. Gehenna. Gehenna. And it's named. After a place. Just southeast of Jerusalem.

[14:08] Called the Valley of Hinnom. Which in Hebrew would be. Gei Hinnom. Valley of Hinnom. Gei Hinnom. Gei Hinnom. Gehenna. Gehenna. That's kind of where it comes from. And this was a place.

And it was an awful place. It was a place. Where worship was given. To a false god. Called Moloch. Gehenna. And in that place. In the Valley of Hinnom. Child sacrifices.

Took place. And then that place. Under King Josiah. Who was initially. A very good king. He destroyed that place. Wiped it out. And the priest there. Condemned it unclean.

And so. The Valley of Hinnom. It was just this. Epitome. Of evil. And uncleanness. And curse. And so. The New Testament. Takes that language. And takes that place.

And uses Gehenna. To mean the awful place. After death for the damned. And so. The big thing to see here is. Hell. Is a real place in creation.

[15:06] But we also need to see this. In my second point. Hell. Is intermediate. And final. So. Hell. Is intermediate. And final. Let me flip this. I love this new Bible. It's great.

It's great. Hell. Is intermediate. And final. And remember. If you weren't here. Intermediate. Is safe. Which means. Safe. And when you die. From when you die. To the resurrection.

What happens. Between death. And the resurrection. Where do souls go. And we need to see. Hell. Is intermediate.

And final. So you may have already seen. I think Iona. Asked last week. You may have already seen. That the place. The intermediate. State. For the unbeliever. And the final. State for the unbeliever. Can you see it? It's both hell.

Isn't it? Hell is the same. For both. But. If you look at. If you look at. If you look at. For the unbeliever. It's heaven. But then there's. A slight difference. Is that it's the new creation. On earth. [16:00] And we'll come to that next week. But for hell. Hell is for both. And the Bible isn't. Isn't kind of super obvious. About this distinction. But we do see it.

That this applies. To both. This location applies. To both states. But we're going to say. One stage is temporary. And then the other is final. Eternal. And so.

Think about the intermediate state. Look at Luke 16. That we were just in. Where does the rich man's soul go. After death. He goes to hell. Doesn't he?

That's the intermediate state. But it's also pre-judgment. And also. Look in 2 Peter. But Peter says. Fallen angels.

And the unrighteous. Are in hell. Before judgment day. Waiting for final judgment. So 2 Peter 2. 4. For if God did not spare angels. When they sinned.

[16:57] But cast them into hell. And committed them. To chains of gloomy darkness. To be kept. Until the judgment. And then 2 Peter 2.

9. Then the Lord knows. How to keep the unrighteous. Under punishment. Until the day of judgment. And so.

Who are in hell right now. It's angels. And the unrighteous. After they die. It's where the unsaved. Go to after death.

As souls. In the intermediate state. But also. It is the place. Where the unsaved. Go in the final state. And so. Just follow with me here.

Look at John 5. 28 to 29. An hour is coming. When all who are in tombs. Will hear his voice. And come out. And those who have done good.

[17:53] To the resurrection of life. And those who have done evil. To the resurrection of judgment. There will be a point. When Christ returns.

When every human. Every human. Will be physically. Bodily. Resurrected. And those. Outside of Christ. Will be judged. In their bodies. There will be a resurrection.

Of judgment. In the final state. And Jesus says. That body. That is raised. Will be thrown into hell. Matthew 10.

28 again. Fear him. Who can destroy. Both soul. And body. In hell. And so. When the bodily. Resurrection. Happens.

At the end of this age. We'll see this. Next week. When the bodily. Resurrection. Happens. At the end of this age. Christ. Will throw. The ungodly. Into hell. Not only their souls.

[18:50] But body too. So you can kind of. Think of hell like this. In the intermediate state. It's soul only. Pre-judgment. Under a temporary. Punishment.

But in the final state. It's body and soul. Post-judgment. For final punishment. You might be asking. Well. What's the difference. Between the two.

Answer. We don't really know. It's the same location. The Bible talks about it. In the same way. And refers to the same thing. But. But probably. And almost surely.

This is worse. Okay. Because the final state. It's not just provisional. It's after judgment. When Jesus has weighed. Every sin. In the balance.

And then full punishment. Is given. But what does that mean. What exactly. Is hell like. Well. There are four things. I want us to see.

[19:47] What is hell like. First is this. Hell. Is separation. From God. So look at. Two Thessalonians 1. It's talking about. The ungodly.

They will suffer. The punishment. Of eternal destruction. Away from the presence. Of the Lord. And from the glory. Of his might. Matthew 25.

Depart from me. Says Jesus. You cursed. Into the eternal fire. Prepared for the devil. And his angels. One of the biggest impressions.

We get about hell. Is that. It is separation. From God. In particular. It's separation. From his love. And mercy. Hell.

Is where every mercy. And gift. And goodness. Of God. It's where it's taken away. That's why it's called. Darkness. So Matthew 8. Thrown into the outer darkness.

[20:46] It's not that hell. Has the light. God's turned off. No. It's. It's that in hell. God's mercy. Is turned off. God is light. But none of his light.

Will shine in that dark place. So. Just think about. This world right now. That we're living in. Right now. That this world. Is sinful. Isn't it? But it's not sinful.

As it could be. There is light. In this world. Isn't it? God is. Restraining. So much evil. And corruption. Right now. He's not letting this world.

Fall into complete ruin. This world. Even the unbeliever in this world. Experiences God's mercy. Right now. Right now. He sends the sun. And the rain.

On believer. And unbeliever. But in hell. All that mercy. Will disappear. And evil. And sin.

[21 : 40] And suffering. Is allowed to unleash. And so. If someone doesn't want God's goodness. In hell. God says. Fine. Here's what that's like.

But that doesn't mean God isn't present in hell. Hell is separation from his love and mercy. But not God's presence entirely.

No. In hell. God is present in his anger. That's my second sub point. Hell is experiencing God's anger. Look at Revelation 14. In hell.

They are tormented with fire and sulfur. In the presence of the holy angels. And in the presence of the lamb. God will be present in hell.

He will be doing something. He will be actively punishing. People and angels. And the devil. It will be an unfiltered experience of God's wrath. You could say.

[22 : 40] His mercy will be far. But his anger will be close. But what do we mean by that? How will we experience his anger? Well it will be through pain.

That's my third sub point. Hell is painful. Hell is often associated with fire. Isn't it? So look at these verses of God out for you. Luke 16.

I am in anguish in this flame. Revelation 14. Being tormented with fire and sulfur. Mark 9. Where the worm does not die.

And the fire is not quenched. Now it can be easy for our minds to kind of drift off into how cartoons and paintings depict hell. I think we can easily do that can't we?

With kind of lots of actual fire. Maybe there will be actual fire. But we don't know. But the language of fire here. It's symbolic language. Pointing to something.

[23 : 40] It's pointing to pain. So you put your hand on a stove. What do you feel? Pain. Pain. You burn your hand on the oven.

What do you feel? Pain. The language of fire shows us that hell will be conscious pain. And it will be painful in body and soul.

So remember Matthew 10.28. Fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. It will be a destructive experience for the body. And when Jesus says it's the place where the worm does not die.

That's the image of a worm constantly eating at your flesh. It's pain in the body. But also the soul. Look at Matthew 8. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

When do we weep? We weep when there's grief and anguish. And pain in the soul don't we? And gnashing of teeth.

[24 : 46] That's the it's a picture of kind of anger and frustration. It's like a crazed beast gnashing their teeth. There will be agonizing mental anguish.

Emotional pain and distress in hell. And this pain does not end. It's eternal. And this is the fourth sub point.

Hell is eternal. Look at the eternal language here. Matthew 9. Where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

Matthew 25. Eternal fire. Prepared for the devil and his angels. To Thessalonians 1. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction. Now remember from last week.

Destruction doesn't mean deletion. Right? We know that souls don't get deleted in death or in hell. This refers more to ruin. So you know.

[25 : 44] If you were to say. My life is destroyed. It means. Your life has been ruined. It's degraded. It's humiliating.

It's a worsening experience. Destruction isn't it? Destruction is tumbling down from where you were. But in hell. This is endless tumbling.

You only go from worse to worse. And the pain is never ending. No relief. No break. No pause. No hope.

No chance of maybe you'll die and go to nothing at the end of this. No. It will just go on and on forever. And after a trillion years. That won't even be halfway. Because there is no halfway. And so hell is eternal punishment. But now let me ask you. Who goes to hell? The Bible firstly says that the devil and his angels go to hell.

[26 : 44] Firstly. The Bible is clear about this. The devil will go to hell. Matthew 25. Eternal fire. Prepared for the devil and his angels. So Satan.

Is not actually in hell right now. Often we kind of think. Hell is maybe kind of like his hiding den. And then he kind of pops out into the world. And kind of hell is his home. That's where he likes to be. But no. Satan is working here on earth. And hell is prepared for him. At the end of this age. In the final state.

When all evil will be locked up there. And never to come out again. But also. Who will go to hell. And we mustn't shy away from this.

Unbelievers will go to hell. So look at 2 Thessalonians 1. This is talking about the return of Christ. Which we'll come to next week. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven.

[27 : 45] With his mighty angels. In flaming fire. Inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God. And on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. For all who do not believe the gospel.

Who do not put their trust in the Lord Jesus. This. By nature. Without Christ. This is where we must go. It's not like. Well only the really bad sinners go to hell.

No. Anyone who is not in Christ. This is their fate. And sinners go there. Because they have something to pay. They need to pay for their sins.

Remember the wages of sin. The payment you need to pay for sin. The wages of sin. Is death. And so the second death of hell.

Is what every sinner must pay. Now. At this point. Let me address the objection of. This isn't fair.

[28 : 47] How can people who have sinned. Just over a few years. How is it. Just. That they will have eternal punishment. Now.

I can only give a quick answer to this. But this is the heart of it. Punishment is infinitely long. Because God is infinitely holy. Punishment is infinitely long.

Because God is infinitely holy. So. So just imagine this. You go outside. You spit on the ground. Who cares. No one.

Do they. Right. Okay. You're a child. You spit on your brother. What happens. Your dad tells you off. You go to school.

You spit on your teacher. You get expelled. You go to the street. You spit on a police officer. You get arrested. You spit on King Charles.

[29 : 43] You're going to prison. Well. In our sin. We have spat in the face. Of the holy. And righteous. And almighty God.

So we need to realize. Hell is fair. God created hell. from his perfect. And wise justice. Now.

I'll stop for questions at the end. But I just want to end. With a major point. About the intermediate state. And all of this. And it's this. Death. Is your fate locked in. Death.

Is when your fate. Is locked in. So. So when we die. So look at the point of death. When we die. We enter. Either heaven. Or hell. And after that point.

Point of death. There's no swapping. Okay. So look at. Luke 16. 25. Between us. And you.

[30 : 42] A great chasm. Has been fixed. In order that. Those who would pass. From here. To you. May not do so. From heaven to hell. May not do so. And none may cross. From there.

To us. Look at Hebrews. 9. 27. It is appointed. For man. To die once. And after that. Comes judgment.

And we are judged. For the deeds. Done in the body. Not in the soul. In the intermediate state. It's what's done. In the body. This life. And so once we die. That is our fate.

Locked in. Once a soul. Enters this. Intermediate state. If you're in hell. You will stay in hell.

In the final state. And if you're in heaven. You will. For certain. You will be in the new creation. And death. Locks that fate in.

[31 : 41] And there are just. Just a few things. Implications of this. That is why. We don't. And we shouldn't. Pray for the dead. So have you noticed that.

The Bible. Never gives an example. For praying for the dead. It actually forbids. Necromancy. Kind of communicating. With the dead. And in the confession.

I haven't got it written out for you. But in the confession. It actually says. In worship. Pray should not be given. For the dead. And that's because. Either. There's no hope for them. Anymore.

Or. There's no need to pray for them. Because they're safe with Christ. But either way. There's no examples in scripture. For praying for the dead.

And so. God just never teaches us to do that. So. Let me say. Don't pray for the dead. Pray for those who are left behind. But another implication. This is why there's no purgatory.

[32 : 39] So strictly speaking. This is a big topic. But I need to be quick about this. Strictly speaking. The purgatory is for those. Who are going to heaven. But it's kind of either. People might say.

Purification. Before you go into heaven. Or it's kind of punishment. Before you go into heaven. It depends on what. Rome happens to be. But it's kind of like. You might imagine. Like a saint here. It's kind of.

Free heaven. It's kind of like. A third. Intermediate states. But quite simply. There's no mention. Whatsoever. In scripture of purgatory.

What is taught is. After death. It's either heaven. Or hell. And any punishment. Only happens in hell. But there's no other place. Where that would happen.

And also. Believing souls. Are made perfect at death. And then go to heaven. We saw that last week. But there's another implication. This is why life matters.

[33 : 38] If death. Is fate locked in. We need to do something. In this life. We need. We need. To believe the gospel. We need.

To cling to Christ. And we need to never. Ever. Ever. Let go. Because that is the only way. Out of hell. Which also means. That there is an urgency.

In our evangelism. And our prayers. Isn't there? That this life matters. For those who have not heard the gospel. And at this point.

Let me just. I'll finish in a moment. But let me just address. A really difficult topic. How do we cope. With knowing. Some of our loved ones.

Have died. Without believing the gospel. Well this isn't easy. And it's not a nice thought. But the answer is. We just really need to believe.

[34 : 37] And trust in God's wisdom in this. Trust that God is just. And the decisions he makes. Are good. They're right. And he knows what he's doing.

And we also need to know. When we are in heaven. Or the final new creation. When we're there. There will not be any sadness. Or distress. Or kind of wandering around.

Thoughts in our hearts. Nothing will take that experience. Instead. We will just feel. A sense of. Peace. And a deep sense of. Yeah.

Justice has been done. I have no complaints here. But let me end on this. If you are in Christ. Your fate.

Your fate is not hell. Because on the cross. Jesus went through hell. He drank the cup of God's wrath.

[35 : 34] That's the cup that unbelievers will drink in hell. But on the cross. Jesus drank it for us. He experienced the pain and anguish of hell on the cross.

That's why Gethsemane was so hard for him. God stopped his mercy. And unleashed his anger. And Jesus went through a hellish, hellish experience.

In his body and soul. And why did he do it? He did it for you. For his church. So that you and everyone who believes in him.

Will never perish. Will never experience this. But instead. Without doubt. Without doubt. You will have eternal life.

And what does that eternal life look like? Well. We will see that next week. We've got a few minutes for questions.

[36 : 32] I might need to finish a little bit early. But a few minutes for questions.