

Biblical Womanhood

by

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THE LAST DAYS OF HISTORY (30)

(10viii) THE DESCRIPTION OF HELL

Read Mat 25:31-46. *Jesus tells about the Final Judgement*

“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Mat 25:46)

Everlasting punishment takes place in hell (the lake of fire, or Gehenna), the place of punishment after death for those who refuse to repent. In the Bible, three words are used in connection with eternal punishment.

(1) *The grave*, or Sheol,” is used in the Old Testament to mean the place of the dead, generally thought to be under the earth. (See Job 24:19; Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 38:10).

(2) *Hades* is the Greek word for the underworld, the realm of the dead. It is the word used in the New Testament for Sheol. (see Matthew 16:18; Revelation 1:18; 20:13, 14).

(3) *Hell*, or gehenna, was named after the Valley of the Son of Hinnom near Jerusalem where children were sacrificed by fire to the heathen gods (see 2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3). This is the place of eternal fire (Matthew 5:22; 10:28; Mark 9:43; Luke 12:5; James 3:6; Revelation 19:20) prepared for the devil, his angels, and all those who do not believe in God (25:46; Revelation 20:9, 10). This is the final and eternal state of the wicked after the resurrection and the Last Judgment.

When Jesus warns against unbelief, he is trying to save us from agonizing punishment.

“Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” (Rev 20:14)

“the lake of fire.” The Bible portrays a terrible picture of the final destiny of the lost. (1) It speaks of “tribulation and anguish” (Rom 2:9), “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mat 22:13; 25:30), “everlasting destruction” (2 Thes 1:9), and a “furnace of fire” (Mat 13:42, 50). It speaks of “chains of darkness” (2 Pet 2:4), “everlasting punishment” (Mat 25:46), a “hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched” (Mark 9:43), a “lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev 19:20), and “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; they have no rest day nor night” (14:11). Indeed, “It is a fearful things to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:31); “It had been good for that man if he had not been born” (Mat 26:24; see also Mat 10:28).

(2) The believers of the NT church were keenly aware of the fate of those who lived in sin. It was for this reason they preached with tears (see Acts 20:19) and defended God’s infallible word and saving gospel against all distortion and false doctrine (see Phil 1:17; 2 Tim 1:14).

(3) The solemn fact of eternal punishment for the wicked is the greatest motivation for carrying the gospel to all the world and doing everything possible to persuade people to repent and receive Christ before it is too late (see John 3:16).

(10ix) THE GREAT TRIBULATION: an overview

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Mat 24:21)

Beginning with Mat 24:15, Jesus speaks about special signs that will occur during the great tribulation (Rev 7:14), signs to indicate that the end of the age is very near (Mat 24:15-29). These signs will lead up to and signal Christ’s return to earth after the tribulation (Mat 24:30-31; cf. Rev 19:11-20:4)

The major sign is “the abomination of desolation” (Mat 24:15), a specific observable event that tells the faithful who are alive during the tribulation that Christ’s coming to earth at the end of the age will occur very shortly.