

Sunday, April 11, 2010—Clear and Present Danger: Mankind's Precarious Position

### **Introduction**

- This morning we are beginning a new series of studies looking at the reality of eternal punishment in the Bible.
- How many of you have ever heard even one sermon on Hell or the Lake of Fire?
- This topic is not popular and it is really talked about. It makes both the saved and unsaved uncomfortable.
  - Unsaved: don't like the implications of hell and question the justice of God for its existence
  - Saved: don't know how to answer the objections raised by the unsaved so they just never talk about it. If we are not going to talk about it we might as well not believe it.
- Popular culture has trivialized the use of the Hell.
- Because of the lack of teaching about eternal punishment many heresies have developed and are increasing in popularity:
  - Annihilationism—people are snuffed out at death or cease to exist.
  - Universalism—everyone including the Devil is going to be saved.
- Even some Grace believers have begun to question the doctrine of eternal judgment citing the fact that Paul never uses the word hell.
- Hell has virtually been removed from popular gospel preaching. Many believers object to the idea of scaring people into salvation. Therefore, a much different approach has been adopted.
  - Use illustration of the parachute.
- Throughout this series of studies we are going to consider the following aspects of eternal punishment.
  - The existence, location, and nature of Hell
  - Difference between Hell and the Lake of Fire
  - Theological basis for the doctrine of Eternal Punishment
  - Consider and answer objections to the doctrine of Eternal Punishment
  - Dispensational consider Hell in time past, but now, and ages to come
  - Study the heresies of Annihilationism and Universalism
- This morning I want to essentially do two things with you:

- Establish that eternal punishment is both Biblical and Pauline
- Demonstrate the precarious nature of man's predicament

### **Biblical Reality of Eternal Punishment**

- II Thessalonians 1:5-9—teaches very clearly that everlasting fire and punishment await those who don't know God.
- Matthew 25:41-46—we already know from our previous series of studies that the Lake of Fire was created for the devil and his angels. Unsaved humanity will also partake in this horrible fact.
- Revelation 14:10-11
- Revelation 20:10
- Revelation 20:11-15

### **Paul's Teachings On Eternal Punishment**

- Acts 24:25—notice Felix's reaction to hearing about judgment to come.
- Romans 1:16-18—the first thing Paul does in explain the gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation is declare to the gentiles that they are under the wrath of God.
- Romans 1:19-23—the gentiles knew who God was but bought into the line program of the adversary and replaced the glory of God for their own religious system.
  - Romans 1:24-25—God gave them up
  - Romans 1:26—God gave them up
  - Romans 1:28—God gave them over to a reprobate mind.
- Acts 14:16—suffered means to allow or to permit. God allowed the gentile nations to what they wanted. From Genesis 11 on God suffered the gentiles to walk in their own way.
- Acts 17:30—Paul calls this the “times of ignorance.” He further says that God “winked at” overlooked, or took no notice off.
- “But now” through the preaching of Paul, God is calling all men everywhere to repent.
- Acts 17:31—the reason all men everywhere are called to repent is because God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness.

- Romans 1:18—it is actually an act of God’s grace that he would warn the gentiles who had already rebelled against God that they were also prime candidates for the judgment of God.
- It’s hard to fully appreciate God’s grace on our behalf until we understand the nature of eternal judgment and what we have been saved from.
- Romans 2:3-4
  - Acts 14:17—even though God suffered them to walk in their own way they were still partakers of the goodness of God which should have led them to repentance.
- Romans 2:5-6—instead through their hard and impenitent heart they treasured up more wrath against themselves. The day of wrath is coming where God will render to every man according to his deeds.
  - Revelation 20:11-13
- Romans 2:7-9—just as God is no respecter of persons when Grace is dispensed he also is receptor of persons when judgment is meted out.

### **Mankind’s Precarious Position**

- Ephesians 2:1-3—we are born dead in trespasses and sins with the wrath of God abiding upon us (Romans 3:23).
- Romans 5:12—we sin because we are sinners by nature.
- Romans 6:23—death is the natural consequence of sin.
- What happens to those who die in their natural state? They face the wrath of God against their sin. They face eternal punishment.
- James 4:14—we all sit on the edge of death every second we are alive. That means the lost sit on the edge of eternal judgment every second they are alive.
- As we study the horrors of eternal punishment over the next couple of weeks we need to acknowledge that the unsaved are in a state of clear and present danger.
- We need to remember the second half of Romans 6:23 “but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- Romans 5:8—we need to appreciate what Christ has done on our behalf and remember the power of God unto salvation.