



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, Revelation 21:1-22:5

"The Unbeliever's Judgment"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Tonight we are turning to Revelation chapter 20, verse 11 through verse 15 for the passage that deals so plainly with the judgment of the wicked dead. Revelation chapter 20, verse 11 through verse 15. Eternal punishment is not a very pleasant subject. Just like cancer or crime or war. It is not pleasant, particularly to men, and I guess that we should add particularly to 20th century men, because human nature, and especially the manifestation of human nature in our day, does not like to think of the fact that it shall be called to account. As they said a long time ago to the prophet Isaiah, "Prophecy not to us right things, speak unto us smooth things." And so the world likes to hear things that are smooth, and things that are not right. They do not realize, often, that the things that they are asking for are things that are wrong. But they like to hear that God is a God of love and a God of mercy, but they do not like to hear that God is a God of justice and a God of righteousness.

A number of years ago Clarence Edward McCartney in one of his sermons said that in one of the Midwestern universities a poll was taken of one hundred selected ministers on the subject of future punishment. The results showed that more than fifty percent did not believe in the future, conscious, eternal punishment of the impenitent. Another poll, Mr. McCartney pointed out, was taken of five hundred ministers of different

Protestant churches. And that poll showed that thirty-four percent did not believe in the future punishment of the finally impenitent.

Now, I think if a poll were to be taken today we would find that these percentages would be drastically decreased from these percentages that are mentioned in these polls. Jerome, who was one of the greatest of the biblical students of his day, Jerome said that if an offense comes out of the truth, better it is that the offense comes than that the truth be concealed. The Apostle Paul said, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." And so, we are not expected, when we become teachers of the word of God or even readers of the Bible, to pass by those parts that are unpleasant. Actually, the idea of hell has the same origin as the idea of heaven. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. The term that is used in the New Testament for hell, most specifically, is the term Gehenna. That term is found about twelve times in the New Testament. It always means hell, and with one exception in James chapter 3, in verse 6, in every other instance it is the Lord Jesus Christ who uses it. So, that Geena is Jesus Christ's word for hell. Thus reminding us of the lions of the Port Kebel, the fount of love. His servant sends to tell love's deeds, himself reveals the sinners hell. So, the Lord Jesus himself is the one who has most fully revealed to us the existence of a hell and eternal punishment.

Charles Wolfe was a preacher of great ability, and in a sermon from the text Ecclesiastes 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Said in a very striking way that the judgments of God fall often enough in this world to let us know that God judges, but seldom enough to let us know that there must be a judgment hereafter. If you're reading the newspapers day by day, and you see the crimes that are committed and are set forth in our newspapers, crimes against children, crimes against women, crimes against the innocent, you cannot help but feel deep down within that not only is there a judgment, but it's going to be a great thing for judgment to come. So that the wrongs committed in our society are going to be righted by the Lord God himself.

Now, in this passage that we're looking at, Revelation chapter 20, verse 11 through verse 15, we have the only final judgment. What a magnificent comprehension and condensation of truth is found in these simple verses. Let me read them beginning in verse 11, Revelation chapter 20,

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Now, first I want you to notice the vision of the throne in verse 11. One might ask the question immediately now, what is the time of this judgment that is referred to here? And we have a clue in the opening three words of the English text of verse 11, "and I saw." Now, as you look back over the immediately preceding sections of the Book of Revelation, in chapters 19 and 20, this expression "and I saw" occurs about seven times, actually it occurs more than seven, but it occurs at seven points which reveal progress in the visions that John is seeing. And these "and I saws" give us an idea of the chronology of these events of the last days.

Now, notice that verse 11 begins, "and I saw." Now, if you look at the immediately preceding context in the 4th verse we read, "And I saw thrones and they sat upon them." At the conclusion of verse 6, the passage dealing with the millennium, we read, "And when the thousand years are ended, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."

We did not read any "and I saw." So the immediately preceding context introduced by the vision nomenclature "and I saw" is followed here by, "And I saw a great white throne." So we reason from this, and I think properly so, that we are talking about a judgment that is to occur at the end of the millennial kingdom upon the earth.

So John has unfolded the facts of the millennium. He has unfolded the final rebellion that shall take place at the end of that kingdom of God upon the earth. And now, he's given the great vision of the throne in verse 11. So we are, I think, encouraged to look to the events just preceding the eternal state or the new heavens and the new earth. Now, John says he saw a great white throne. It seems to me that these are very meaningful words.

First of all it's not simply a throne, but a great throne. And the impression that I get from it is that here we have the final expression of the justice of God. And since the person who sits upon it is an infinite being, it's not really stretching things to say that this word great, this adjective suggests infinite justice. The fact that it is a white throne also, in keeping with the figurative or symbolic nature of the adjective white suggests that it is a throne at which holiness shall be supreme, so, it is an infinite holy. Now, throne itself suggests judgment or justice. So it appears to me that this combination of the two adjectives and the noun, great white throne, suggests infinite holy justice.

Why is it necessary for there to be a Great White Throne Judgment? Well, first of all, the great white throne is a vindication of the holiness of God. Remember, the Old Testament said, as the prophet expressed it in Habakkuk chapter 1, verse 13, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look upon iniquity. So God is a holy God. And it's at the Great White Throne Judgment that there is the vindication of the holiness of God. There are a number of reasons why this is necessary. Someone has put it this way; there are four reasons why justice here is not final and perfect. Some people incidentally like to say here, justice is not perfect, and so therefore we are not to have any

justice. We are to let everybody go free, because we cannot be just in our judgment.

That is a deduction and an inference from the fact of human fallibility that is unjustified.

But we do know that human justice is not final and perfect. One of the reasons why justice here is not final and perfect is that there are so many sins and transgressions of which the human law takes no cognizance. We don't have any laws against mental cruelty. We don't have any laws against ingratitude of children toward their parents, or of wives or husbands to one another. We don't have any laws against scorn. We don't have any laws against falsehood, for that matter, in many cases. And so, the very fact that our laws are imperfect in that respect, they don't cover all of human wrong, makes it necessary for there to be a final judgment.

Furthermore, the human judges in our courts do not know what the exact penalty that fits the offense. Only in one case, so far as I can remember, and that of murder, do we know by the authority of the Bible what the penalty ought to be. And it's not surprising that the penalty is largely not carried out in our Godless society. But the judgments that are less than the judgments that are designed for murder are not set forth in the word of God. So they are really just token penalties, the things that human beings meet out, five years, ten years, twenty years for some crime is Hibernian, it's not divine. And as we shall point out in a moment, it is not just. The human judge also is often uncertain as to the guilt of the prisoner. He doesn't have sufficient evidence, often, to know whether there is really guilt. We've seen enough cases of individuals who go to penitentiaries protesting their innocence, and then years later after they've served in prison for a lengthy period of time, someone comes forward and acknowledges that they are the ones who are really guilty of the crime. So with the best of human justice we cannot really know that a prisoner is guilty.

Now, these are certainly the ones that are not the normal cases, most of the time the guilt is very obvious. That's why God gave judgment into human hands, but we cannot know fully and accurately in every case. And then also, we need perfect justice

hereafter, because in this world the guilty often escape. They're not even brought to any kind of judgment at all, much less freed. It is true that justice stands blindfolded with the balances in her hand, but often justice down here is blindfolded, and consequently men who are guilty are never brought before any bar of judgment. There is going to come a time when God is going to write all of the wrongs, and even those crimes that are not spoken of in our laws, they also are going to be dealt with at the Great White Throne Judgment.

I know that there are people who do not even like the idea of judgment, but nevertheless that is a biblical revelation. In fact, the idea of God punishing someone eternally is something that is very displeasing to people today and very unpleasant to preachers. The great mass of the preachers in our professing Christian churches today are turning to universalism, the belief that ultimately everybody is going to be saved. You can just imagine the reasons that lie behind that. A God of love would never send anybody to an eternal punishment. The idea of a crime committed in time, being punished by an eternity of punishment, why that is very illogical. And so, ultimately everybody is going to get to heaven.

I can just imagine, as one Bible teacher said many years ago, two angels talking together before the creation of the world. And they learned the secret that he was going to create a world, and he was going to bring a universe into an existence that would have rational spirits. Now, they would also have bodies. One said to the other one, "Have you heard? God's going to create a world." And the other angel said, "Yes." "That he is going to have moral intellectual beings in that world?" "Yes." "Not purely spiritual beings like ourselves, but beings with material bodies, and yet with minds and wills, just as we angels have minds and wills of our own." "Yes, I've heard that's his purpose." "But can you answer this question? Do you think our God will ever permit unhappiness to come into the world that he's going to create?" "Oh certainly he will not," the other would say. "Our

kind, loving God will never permit unhappiness to come into a world that he is about to create."

Well, you can just go right down the line of the things that they might have said. "Do you think he'll permit sin? Do you think he'll permit men to suffer pain and anguish? Do you think he'll permit men to suffer from the hands of wicked people, when they themselves are innocent?" Well, we can argue as much as we like, and we can reason and rationalize about it, but in the final analysis we know that he has permitted these things to come to pass, and they tell us what our God is really like. He does permit sin. He does permit wickedness. He does permit injustice, and those things are designed ultimately to reveal the kind of person he is. He is a just God, and he's a loving God, and he does punish sin.

Well then, one of the reasons for the Great White Throne Judgment is the vindication of the holiness of God. Another thing is the revelation of the goodness of God. The ruin of the few may lead to the salvation of many. It's good even for us to suffer for sin. We learn the plight that we are in. A Connecticut preacher once said, "My friend, some believe that all will be saved, but we hope for better things. Chaff and wheat are not to be together always. One goes to the garner and the other goes to the furnace." And then of course, the Great White Throne Judgment is a necessary thing, because it makes very plain the consummation of the sinfulness of man. The fact of our human existence are that when we commit acts of sin our acts of sin lead to habits of sin, and our habits of sin form our character. Isn't it strange, and yet it's not strange when you think about it, that the Bible says that when Judas died he went to his own place. It was the place for which Judas was suited by his character, and also by his acts. We don't realize that the things that we do are things that really affect us, and ultimately make us what we are. In the final analysis we reveal what we are by the acts that we perform.

There is an Old Testament king who illustrates this, I think, and he's Hazael, the king of Syria. Before Hazael became king, Elisha said unto him, "I know the evil that

thou will do unto the children of Israel. Their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with a sword. And we'll dash their children and rip up their women with child." You know what Hazael said? He said, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?" Yet he was led by the insidious, subtle, and progressive nature of sin to commit the barbarities which the prophet predicted, which he viewed at one time with the greatest of horror. But the products of our actions form our character ultimately, so that those who go to hell will go their own place. In fact, if somehow or other things got mixed up, and they were put on the wrong train and arrived in the new heavens and the new earth, that's the last place they would want to be. They want to be with their own.

Peter was in earnest when he said to the Lord Jesus, "Lord, I'm ready to go with Thee both into prison and into death." But you can see the progressive nature of sin, even in Peter the believer. In a moment, he's following Christ afar off. He's found then in bad company. He hears blaspheming and denying and soon this fellow, too, is denying the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the difference between a saint and a sinner is that Peter went out and wept bitterly. But the path of sin is a progressive thing, and the Great White Throne Judgment will reveal the consummation of man's sinfulness.

Now, we read here, "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away." Well, I don't know where this great white throne is going to be set. It is going to be set somewhere in the illimitable space of God, but it's going to be set. No place is found for the earth and the heavens, and there is no one there but the Lord God himself. Now, John in verses 12 and 13 has the vision of the judgment of the dead. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God."

Now, to whom does he refer when he says he saw the dead? Well, if you look back at verses 4 and 5 of this chapter, we read, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not

worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." So here are individuals who lived, but in verse 5 he speaks of the rest of the dead. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power."

So we have here a description of individuals who are living, and then those who are dead. And a thousand years separates the resurrection of the living, that is the believing dead, and the dead who don't live until afterwards. Now, the word live is a reference to bodily resurrection, so that there is a bodily resurrection for the believers before the millennium, and then there's the bodily resurrection for the unbelievers afterwards. But oh what a different kind of body they receive. Believers, we are told in other places, receive a body like our Lord's own body of glory, but the unbelievers, they are going to be resurrected too. There is going to be a resurrection for them, but they will be given a body in which they are able to suffer eternal punishment, and it entirely different from the body of glory that the saints receive.

Now, these are the ones that John sees in verse 12, the unbelieving dead. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." These are the physically and spiritually dead, not simply the physically dead, spiritually living, as is referred to in verses 5 and 6. Among this company there are some well known individuals. We know some of them. We know their names; Cain, he's one of them, Noah's generation, Nimrod, Pharaoh, Saul, probably, Judas, Pope Leo X, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and many others. Some who are living right now, it would seem, are going to be part of this company of the dead, those who deny the truth of the word of God.

Now, when the dead stand before the throne of God, there is nothing there for them, according to this passage. Some years ago I went into a dentist's office over in Lakewood. That itself wasn't pleasant, and I should have known that what I would read

in the book there would not be pleasant there, but I opened up a book entitled, it was really a periodical as I remember it, called the *New Age*. And it was a publication of the Masonic Lodge. And evidently the doctor was doing a little propagandizing of his patients, preparing them for even worse things, I suppose, when they sat in his chair. It's been many years ago, but I asked for permission to clip out a page in that book, and I have it here before me. And it was a foolish article. It was entitled, "The Temple Not Made with Hands, "and it has not theology that's any good at all in it.”

But this particular paragraph was interesting, because it was such a flat denial of the truth of the Bible. "The holy Bible is given us as a rule and guide to faith and life, within its covers we find a set of rules and principles that if followed will make our lives pure and spotless. We will enjoy an honorable life." There is salvation by good works, you see. "And when our weary feet shall have come to the end of their toilsome journey and from our nerveless grasp shall drop forever the working tools of life, and our bodies have been laid beneath the silent clods of the valley, we can look forward, if we have been found faithful, to a triumphal entrance before the great white throne. There to stand before him who sitteth as the judge supreme, and hear from him the welcome words, 'Well done good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord.' Yes," he said, "into the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." What do men imagine rather than studying holy Scripture? This is not an experience that is wonderful and blessed. When John says, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," he's telling us of one of the most awe-inspiring and one of the most terrible scenes in all of human history.

Now, notice he says "the dead small and great," kings and peasants are there, preachers and atheists are there. In other words, all kinds of people, they all small and great, shall be there before God, and he sees them stand before God. That confirms the idea of resurrection involved in the fact that the dead are there, and they did not live until after the thousand year kingdom. So they stand before God. It's going to be really a

terrible sight. Then, the manifestation of sin, which began as they were born, because we are born in sin, lived in them onto its ultimate manifestation in this life, will reach its final, final state there before the Lord God. I would imagine there will not be a handsome or a beautiful face in that entire lot. They will be most gruesome looking people that you could possibly imagine.

I read a story some time ago, it was told by one of the older preachers, about a man who was a painter, and he was very anxious to obtain a person who would sit before him. Or rather, I think the occasion of it was that he saw a lovely baby, and the baby was so impressive to him, that he asked for permission to paint the child, and he painted the child. And he painted it as a type of heaven. And then years later, he decided that he would like to paint a picture of a person who might be symbolic of hellfire. And he was in Italy, and he came upon a person who was the ultimate in gruesome ugliness, and he painted the picture. I have here in my notes somewhere before me, but I can't find it right now, but anyway, he painted this picture, and it was the most gruesome thing he had ever seen in his life. And afterwards, some time afterwards, he found out that they were actually the same persons. That is, the little infant, so beautiful that he could actually be a type of heaven, a picture of the beauty of heaven, in his latter years, by virtue of the working of sin in his body, he had ultimately become that which might be symbolic of Hades itself.

Now, we read here, and they "stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life." A great deal of discussion has taken place over this, because the Bible doesn't give us details about some of these things, and so we have to make certain inferences. We read here of both books, and a book, and so we naturally ask the question, well, what are these books? One is said to be the book of life. The others are simply said to be books. It has commanded the assent of most Bible teachers to expound this by saying that when we read the books were open, and then another book, the book of life, that it is likely that the books are what we would

call the vouchers for the book of life. That the book of life contains certain names, but the books contain the acts of individuals, so that there is a comparison of the book of life with the books which contain the actions.

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse used to explain, without a great deal of support other than the fact that it seemed to make sense, that we have in the Bible a book said to be the book of life, but we also have a book said to be the Lamb's book of life. And he suggested that the book of life, since there is there evidence that this was customary for villages and cities to have, a book of life, in which were set forth all of the citizens that were born in the city, very much like our bureau of records where you go to get your birth certificate, so that everyone who was born in a particular community, his name would be entered into the book of life. But the Lamb's book of life is the book of the elect. And it was Dr. Barnhouse's suggestion that the book of life records the name of every individual born in this universe, and as a person dies never having believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, his name is erased or blotted out from the book of life. For the Bible speaks of the blotting out of names from the book of life. So that in the final analysis, those left in the book of life will be exactly the ones that are found in the Lamb's book of life elected before the foundation of the world.

Now, that makes sense, but there is nothing really in the Bible that would make us think that that's exactly what it has to be. Here we read books were opened and the book of life is open. We assume that in one there are the works, by which individuals are going to be judged, and in the other we have the one book that has to do with their name. So there are two witnesses, one vouchers of the other. By the way, when the books are opened and the book of life is opened, the one sitting on the throne doesn't do this to find out who is in the book of life. He doesn't do it in order to find out what is written in the books. He already knows all of that. This is a symbolic picture. He's not curious, the judge is not sitting there twiddling his thumbs until finally the books are opened, and then with great expectation looking down and seeing, well, I wonder who's

really going to be in this book. This is the sovereign God. He knows exactly what's in the book, what we are given here is an exposition in order that we might understand it figuratively and have some conception of it.

Now, we read, they were judged "according to their works." Twice it's said that they were judged according to their works. At the end of verse 12, "according to their works," and then in verse 13, "judged every man according to their works." Now, there are a couple of things here that I think we should note. One is this judgment is a just judgment. Paul tells us in Romans that God will judge the secrets of men, according to the gospel that he proclaimed. Now, he didn't mean that men were going to be judged by the gospel. He meant his Good News was a Good News that comprehended a judgment of men. And God would judge the secrets of their hearts, not simply the outward, but the inward as well. All of his thoughts. This is going to be a most magnificent and interesting scene. Now, I don't want to be there in order to rejoice the unhappiness of unbelievers necessarily, but it's going to be certainly, a manifestation of the infinite God. They are to be judged justly.

Some years ago, I was thinking about this and looked up in the World Book Encyclopedia some facts on light, wondering how it is that this judgment would be so just, and that the men would actually be judged by, and all of their thoughts even would be measured by God. You know when we pull up a shade in a dark room, the light seems to cross the room and reach the opposite wall immediately. Actually, astronomers have known for a long time that it takes time for light to travel from one place to another. According to modern discoveries, the speed of light is the fastest possible speed. Or at least that's the speed by which other things are measured. It's a measuring rod in the study of both atoms and the great distances in astronomy.

The speed of light was measured by a series of experiments made by Professor Albert Michaelson of the University of Chicago. He found that light traveled in a vacuum at one hundred and eighty-six thousand, two hundred and eighty-four miles per second.

Or if you are interested in the other figure, two hundred ninety-nine thousand, seven hundred and ninety-six kilometers per second. If the sun were to stop giving light, we would still continue to see it for about eight minutes, because it would take five hundred seconds for light to travel from the sun to us. On the other hand, if the North Star suddenly exploded, we wouldn't see the explosion for seventy-five years, because it takes that long for light to travel from that star to us. If we could, so the World Book Encyclopedia said, if we could sit on the star regal with a very powerful telescope focused on the earth, we would just be able to see Columbus on the shores of America. It takes that long for the light to travel.

Now, if that is true it is certainly not inconceivable that when we, we generally, when man stands before the Great White Throne Judgment there is not going to be any question about it. Even the brain waves, but all of the actions have created waves, and those waves will actually be seen by the individuals involved. Their mouths will be shut. They will actually see and even hear the things that they have said hundreds of years previously in their lifetime. This judgment is to be absolutely just. If we can even see how it might come to pass naturally, how much more with this eternal God. It's no wonder then that when the Lord Jesus was telling the parable in Luke chapter 16, of the rich man and Lazarus, and he has Abraham say, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things. And likewise Lazarus evil things," that he says, "Son, remember." In other words, they will remember. They will remember everything that they've done. That judgment is going to be just. It will be in accordance with their works.

Now, some Bible teachers have said that we're going to be judged by our faith in Jesus Christ. Well, of course we shall be judged by that, but we shall be judged by works, because a works judgment of unbelievers will ultimately be the same kind of judgment so far as righteousness is concerned. The person who has believed in Jesus Christ will be acquitted by virtue of the things that Christ has accomplished. So, he won't have to

appear before this, but the fact that a man does not believe will be evidenced by his life. That's what our Lord says now.

That is evidenced by their lives, so they're judged according to their works. The judgment is really ultimately the same, because a man's faith is seen in his works or it is not seen in his works. This judgment is in degrees. The Bible does tell us that there are some that shall suffer more than others. The Lord Jesus speaks of that in Matthew chapter 11, when he speaks about how the judgment shall be greater for some cities than for others. Let me remind you of those verses in Matthew chapter 11, verse 20 or so, "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works of his were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment, than for you." We needn't look at the other passages, but that establishes the fact that judgment is in degrees.

Now, we read in verse 13, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." No one is excluded. The consequences of the judgment are described in verses 14 and 15. He says, "And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Now, you'll remember that in the Garden of Eden when man sinned, God pronounced judgment upon Adam, upon Eve, and upon the serpent. The judgment for the failure to keep the covenant, he broke the covenant, ate of that fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, is death, spiritual death. The spiritual death manifested itself in physical death. "Dust thou art, unto dust thou shalt return," now since you've sinned Adam. And if a man is not delivered from that spiritual death which issues in physical death, then his spiritual death is prolonged into eternity. So that we often say that there are three kinds of death, spiritual, physical, eternal. But really there is

only one penalty, it is death. It manifests itself in physical death. Prolonged, it is eternal death.

Well, first of all he speaks then of the abolition of death and Hades, and then the initiation of the second death, verse 15, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Sin involves endless guilt. Time does not convert sin into innocence. We tend to think that. We think that because we sinned twenty years ago, well twenty years wipes out a lot of things, and so time has covered our guilt. No, no. A sin committed twenty years ago is just as much an offense against a holy God today as it was when you committed it twenty years ago. Time does not change sin into innocence. The idea, I say, of guilty for ten days, or guilty for thirty days, or guilty for a year or ten years, that's human justice. That's not divine, that's Hibernian. The Bible speaks of the fact of eternal judgment, because the person against whom we sin is an infinite God, and you are just as guilty now as you were when you committed that sin twenty-five, thirty years ago, if it is not covered by the blood of Christ.

There is a magnificent statement by a preacher, and older preacher, who speaks about judgment, and I'd like to read it, because I think it's really a magnificent thing. He says, "The eternal punishment of the wicked, the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the eternity of God, as far as revelation is concerned, form the same building. The Universalist has placed his shoulders against the basement pillars, and if he succeeds the whole structure falls. But he and his co-laborers may toil and sweat and leave their bones to molder away in the cellars, but God live on. The righteous shout on." He means in joy. "And the damned groan on throughout all eternity." All eternity, God is an infinite God, and the sin against him is infinite sin. And it's not lessened in any way by the passage of time. That's why punishment must be eternal punishment.

And furthermore, the more a person suffers punishment, the more opposed and rebellious to the word of God he becomes throughout the ages of eternity. So one thousand years after he has been in the lake of fire, he will be more rebellious against

God than he was when he began his period of time in the lake of fire. Thus, the Bible speaks of human sin; the reality and horror of the second death. The Bible speaks of so plainly. Listen to the terrors of the wicked, and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth, and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, for it is profitable for thee if one of thy members perish, and not that thy whole body be cast into hell." Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

L. R Scarborough was a well known Baptist preacher. A man came to him once, in one of the churches in which he was pastor, and wanted to join the church. He said, "I'm thinking of joining your church, and I have a question to ask you, do you believe it's necessary in order for a man to be a Baptist to believe in the doctrine of hell?" "Well," said the preacher, "let's see, maybe your trouble is more serious than that. Do you believe in heaven?" The man said, "Oh yes, I firmly believe in heaven. You buried my mother not long ago, and you also buried my son some time back. And I believe that both are in heaven." "And you do not believe in hell?" Dr. Scarborough said. He said, "No I don't believe in hell. I believe hell is an injustice. It's dishonoring to God, and I don't believe a merciful God would allow there to be a place of eternal punishment."

"Well," Dr. Scarborough said, "on who's authority do you believe in heaven?" "Well, on the authority of the Lord Jesus, on the authority of the Bible." He said, "On whose authority in the Bible?" He said, "On the authority of the Lord Jesus as set forth in the Bible." "Well," said Dr. Scarborough, "on the authority of Christ you believe in heaven. Now suppose I quote from Jesus Christ just as plain a statement regarding hell. Do you believe that Christ will tell you the truth about heaven, and he'll not tell you the truth about hell?" "Oh," said the man, "you put it that way." "Yes I do. Jesus Christ," Dr. Scarborough says, "speaks many more times about eternal punishment than he does about

heaven." And then he added, "My friend, if you don't believe in the doctrine of hell, you don't believe that Jesus Christ is a reliable authority about anything." That's true. That is true. There is no need to talk about the Bible and about Christ, if we don't believe in the judgment of the wicked dead. It is the Lord Jesus, into whose hands God has given, more than any other New Testament character, the preaching of the doctrine of hell.

There is a way of escape. Hell lies at the end of a Christ-less life. The way of escape is the belief in a redeemer who has offered a sacrifice for sinners. You may come, receive as a free gift everlasting life by virtue of the blood that was shed, and have the assurance that you'll never appear before the Great White Throne Judgment. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful to Thee for these wonderful passages from the Bible, which warn us and admonish us concerning righteousness and justice. We do look forward to the day when there is equity in the earth. Oh God, help us to plus brands from the burning in the mean time, by Thy grace, through the Holy Spirit and the word. For Jesus' sake. Amen