



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 20:7 - 21:8

“The Eternal State and Eternal Punishment”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] For those of you who have been following along with us regularly we have been studying the subject, “Death and Afterwards,” and today is the seventh and last in that series. And our subject is “The Eternal State and Eternal Punishment.” And as a basis for the message that follows, I want to read a passage beginning in the 20th chapter of the Book of Revelation, the 7th verse through the 21st chapter and the 8th verse, chapter 20, verse 7 of the Book of Revelation. You will recognize that some of these verses do not specifically apply to our subject, but some do. For this is a doctrinal subject and there are some parts of this section which are important for our theme. Revelation chapter 20 and verse 7,

“And when the thousand years are ended, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever

and ever. (Will you notice especially those last words of that 10th verse?) 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. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (And will you notice particularly that verse?) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (Will you also notice that verse?) He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

May God add his blessing to this reading of his inspired word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Our gracious God and Heavenly Father, we are grateful that it is our privilege to gather in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to open the holy Scripture and to read from them the thoughts and purposes and plans of almighty God. We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou art not a God far from us whom we cannot touch by the hand of faith, but Thou art a God who through Jesus Christ is near to us. And we thank Thee that we are able to approach Thee as a Father, and bring our petitions to Thee and know that through him we have the ear of the everlasting God.

And Lord, we bring before Thee the needs that exist in this auditorium today. So many of us, Lord, need to know Thee in a deeper and more significant way, both young and old, and we pray, O God, that Thou wilt quicken our spiritual impulses and our spiritual aspirations and desires so that we may put Thee first in our lives. We thank Thee for the work which Thou hast committed to us.

We thank Thee for the local church which Thou hast said in Thy word is the pillar and ground of the truth and may, O God, this gathering of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ be a place from whence the word of God continues to go forth not only when we meet together on the Lord's day but also throughout the days of this week in our own personal lives and in our families.

And so, O God may Thy blessing rest upon us throughout this week. We thank Thee for the privilege of proclaiming the word, and we remember our oneness in the body of Jesus Christ that we are not unique but part of that one great body of believers in him who loved us and gave himself for us.

And so may Thy blessing rest upon the whole body of the Lord Jesus Christ, the invisible and the mystical body which is composed of all who have genuinely believed on

Jesus Christ wherever they are today, Lord, we pray Thy blessing upon them, in this city throughout this state and country, and to the four corners of the earth.

We thank Thee too Lord, for our country and for the opportunities and privileges which are ours in the United States and again we pray for our President and for those who are associated with him. May he have wisdom and guidance from Thee.

And Lord, may Thy blessing rest upon us today as we open the word and listen to the Scriptures which tell us of Jesus Christ. May he be exalted and honored in all that is said and done. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today is “The Eternal State and Eternal Punishment.” And so will you open your Bible's to the 20th chapter of the Book of Revelation. I want to refer to the 20th, the 21st, and the 22nd chapters and some other places as well. Now for the sake of a few of you who have not been here during our series. This is the last message and so, consequently you have a lot to catch up, but for just a moment or two let me again review the things that we have learned.

We have learned that the term “death” is used in the Scripture of three experiences. It is used of spiritual death, the separation of the spirit from the body. Everyone is born spiritually dead. Our spirits are separated from God. Consequently we are dead in that sense. Then the term is used of physical death, for when a person dies the spirit departs that body, and instead of that body being a someone, it is now a something because the person has gone. Physical death is the separation of the spirit from the body. The term death is also used of eternal death, or the second death, as we read. That is the prolongation throughout eternity of spiritual death. That is, if we refuse to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ while we are here, we who are spiritually dead shall stay spiritually dead throughout eternity and that is called in the Bible the second death, and ultimately those who are spiritually dead will find themselves in the lake of fire

according to the teaching of the 20th chapter of the Book of Revelation which we have just read.

We also learned that both reason and revelation testify to life after death. We said under the subject of reason that history testifies to a universal belief in life after death. For example, Socrates once said as he was about to die, “You can bury me if you can catch me.” And what he meant by that was that you would not be able to catch his spirit for his spirit would leave his body. We also learned under the topic of reason that intuition supports life after death for men deep down in their hearts have an intuition regarding life after death. That logic also supports it, for we have a sense of incompleteness in this life, that the moral order of the universe demands life after death for injustice as well as justice is in existence and is found in human society now. There must be a time in which, if this is a moral order, in which the injustices and unrighteousness's of human life are set straight.

But most of all we turn to the Bible, the revelation of God, and we learn plainly from the Scriptures that there is life after death. A Christian has a tremendous hope and consequently when a Christian dies he knows that this is really the beginning of a new and greater life than he has ever known before. Consequently it is one of the most discouraging experiences to attend the funeral in which the minister is not a Christian, and I have attended a number of these in which the minister has said in order to comfort the family of one who has gone, to say to them now we cannot know whether there is any life after death or not. We sometimes hope that there is, and we sometimes hope that there is not. Now that is not very comforting. Christian's funerals are entirely different for we know that there is life after death.

We learned also that all the dead are conscious, not only the believing dead, not only are they conscious after they die, that is, that their spirits have knowledge and memory and other attributes of consciousness, but we also learned that the unbelieving

dead are conscious as well. And they are conscious of torment. So, all of the dead that die are conscious after death.

We learned then that the believing dead look forward to the resurrection of the body which will take place at the rapture of the church when Jesus Christ comes in the air. The moment we die our spirits go to be with the Lord Jesus, then we in that unclothed state, not having our resurrection bodies, await that resurrection which occurs when the Lord Jesus comes in the air and calls the whole church up to meet him in the air. The spirits of those who have come with him rejoin their resurrection bodies made new by our Lord Jesus Christ's power. Those who are living believers on the earth are changed, given their resurrection bodies. The two groups meet together and then they meet the Lord. So, that the bride meets the bridegroom in the air.

Now this is the hope of those who are believers. We look forward to the resurrection of the body. This is why so often as you read through the New Testament and especially in the Book of Acts when the apostle was defending the faith that he was preaching, he spoke so often about the resurrection as being the hope of the believer. It was the hope of Israel, and it is the hope of the church. The resurrection of the body, not the resurrection of the spirit, but the resurrection of the body, that is Christian truth. The resurrection of the body is one of the foundations of the Christian faith found even in such ecumenical creeds as the Apostle's Creed, the resurrection of the body.

Then we learned that every Christian after he meets the Lord in the air and receives his resurrection body is to stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. Now this judgment seat does not touch his eternal destiny. It touches his service for the Lord. We are judged as sinners at the cross of the Lord Jesus when all of our sins were taken by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is our judgment as a sinner. Christ has died for our sins. We are judged after we believe in the Lord Jesus in this life as sons, and there is a very, very interesting and definite system of discipline that is set forth in the word of God.

Now I never knew exactly what my father was going to do. He sometimes used the razor strap and sometimes he used a brush. I was quite sure he was going to do something when I disobeyed him, and I knew that I was to have discipline. But in the Bible it is wonderful in this respect that God has set forth exactly what he is going to do, and if we who are Christians wander from the path of God he will discipline us. He will spank us and then of course that discipline, you remember in a previous series we talked about that, that discipline may ultimately lead to physical death, not spiritual death, but physical death, for it is possible for a Christian to be good enough for heaven, but not good enough for the earth in the sense that he is such a poor testimony here that God has to take his physical life so that he goes immediately into the presence of the Lord. Every Christian then must stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, and I want to tell you that every time that I have thought about this in the seven messages it has brought a solemnity over me to think about the fact that someday I'm going to stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. And do you know it might not be so far off for us who are believers too. And so O how we ought to use the time that we have to glorify and serve the God who has loved us so much.

Then following that believers look forward to the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus in which we come with him to the earth and we rule and reign with him in the Kingdom of God upon the earth. So we look forward to the resurrection. We look forward to the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. We look forward to the Advent, and we look forward to the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus upon the earth.

What about the unbelieving dead, to what do they look forward? Well last time we studied the Great White Throne Judgment and we saw that the unbelieving dead are held for the Great White Throne Judgment. Ultimately they shall stand before the Great White Throne and as far as we can tell from Revelation chapter 20, verses 11 through 15 all the dead stand there and no one of the dead escapes and all of them shall be cast into the lake of fire. That is the future for the unbelieving dead.

Now, of course the last question that we might ask ourselves is, “What about the ultimate future? What about that beyond the Great White Throne Judgment, and what about that beyond the Kingdom for believers and for unbelievers?” And so, that brings us to the topic today of “The Eternal State,” which is the ultimate future of believers, and “Eternal Punishment” which is the ultimate future for the unbelievers.

Now this morning if I get my words twisted up I want to go on record right now that it is entirely possible that I do this because when I haven't slept it's difficult for me to arrange all of my thoughts properly, and so if I say something and you know it is obviously wrong well just put it down to that. And if I should fall asleep, please wake me up. [Laughter] And if you fall asleep I'm going to wake you up too.

So, today now “The Eternal State and Eternal Punishment.” Now men are very, very quick to accept the fact that there is such a thing as an eternal state. They are very happy to think about heaven. In fact a lot of people are talking about heaven. Most people think somehow or other that they are going to manage to get to heaven someday. We are willing to accept that doctrine, but the moment you talk about the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent then of course we have something that is a stumbling block to many people.

Sometime ago I ran across a statement by a man named Muller, a German. And he said, “No one is surer of applause than a man who discovers some new method of evading justice under the pretext of humanity. And anyone who wants to evade the doctrine of eternal punishment and offers the men a fairly rational basis for refusing that doctrine is sure it seems of some kind of hearing, but what does the Bible say? That is the final authority as far as we are concerned because this is the revelation of God, and it is the revelation of God attested by the miraculous life and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Just as much history as the history books that you study in your schools. So the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, the attestation of the fact that the words

that he spoke were the words of God, and Jesus the eternal Son of God has authenticated the holy Scriptures. So what do they say?

There is only one person who has ever been among us and lived among us as a man who knows the life beyond the grave and that is our Lord Jesus, and he is a reliable guy. What does he say? What has he taught his apostles to say? What has he taught them so that they have written it in this revelation of God? Well that’s what we want to look at. And first of all we are going to review something that we studied when we went through the Book of Revelation, the eternal state. So let’s turn to chapter 21 of Revelation and let me just hit some of the high spots for a few moments to remind you of what the Scriptures say about the new heavens and the new earth.

Now remember in the 20th chapter in the 11th through the 15th verse the apostle has just seen the doom of the damned in hell. Now immediately in chapter 21 he sees a new heaven and a new earth, the bliss of the blessed in heaven. We know of heaven largely from the texts that we look at in Revelation 21 and 22. I have said this very often. I say it again. We do not know much of heaven except that which is set forth for us in this passage and a few other scattered references. The reason is obvious. We could understand them if we really were given a revelation of them.

When I was in Scotland a number of years ago studying, a man came up to me and we were talking about heaven, and he said to me, “You know our hymn books tell us more about heaven than our Bibles.” And he was really right. What he meant to say was that often our hymn writers have spoken about heaven when there is no biblical basis for the statements that they make. They are romanticizing what they feel is the inference derived from Scripture. But what we know if found here. Now we know some very definite things. The apostle speaks here of the new heaven and the new earth. He says, “I saw a new heaven and a new earth.” This dream of a new heaven and a new earth, notice by the way he does not say another heaven and another earth because this is a fresh one. The Greek word *kainos* which is used here is a word that means “fresh.” It’s

not something made over but it is something that is as unique as a resurrection. It is a fresh heaven and a fresh earth. But this dream of a new heaven and a new earth witnesses to man's immortal longings for a better human existence. It also witnesses to man's inherent sense of sin, for he knows that this life cannot be everything. It witnesses also to man's faith in God and that somehow or other God is going to bring out a complete transformation of this human existence.

It's just as if God takes a dirty coal and throws it into a retort and heats it until it is liquid and finally out of that dirty coal brings forth a diamond as it is possible, I understand, in our human life. So, God takes the old creation and it is burned with fire and out of it there comes this new heaven and a new earth.

The other side becomes this side. Eternity transfigures time and John sees this glorious new heaven and the new earth. And notice too in that 3rd verse, I called your attention to it in the Scripture reading, he says, “I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.” Now I think that's the whole story of the Bible gathered upon into one verse for that has been the aim of Scripture to detail for us how it is that God finally is able to tabernacle with men. In the Old Testament we have the tabernacle, a picture of our Lord Jesus. When the Lord Jesus came he was the tabernacle of God. “He tabernacled among us and we beheld him who had the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father.” And everything moves forward to the time when the tabernacle of God is with men and we really are able to know and see our God. So the whole story of the Bible is summed up in this statement, “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men. That is what he has been trying to do all along. And he wants also to sure that as many of you as have been chosen by him shall be with him when the tabernacle of God is with men. You don't like the way I phrased that do you? You don't like to think that he is anxious to see that all those whom he has chosen are there. Well now you think that maybe that's too hard.

Well now I remind you that the Scriptures say that he has chosen us before the foundation of the world. Luke says when Paul preached, “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed and if you have any question about it and you wonder whether you are one of the elect or not, you can settle it right now by in your heart saying, “I thank you Lord for giving Jesus Christ to die for me. I take you as my personal savior.” That settles the question, and if you do that genuinely in your heart that indicates that you have been chosen by him. So don't go out of this auditorium mad at me because I said something about election. The apostles said something about it. Your argument is with them, and if you don't want to receive Christ as your savior what argument have you anyway? So if you are here and you do not know for certain that you are a believer in the Lord Jesus I urge you now with all of the little strength that I have left to put your trust in him at this moment, then this hope of the new heavens and the new earth is a hope that you too will have.

Notice too the 6th verse, John says that he hears a voice from the throne that says, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life.” You know that preceding statement, “I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,” is such a transcendent statement of the glory of God that we might have wondered that if a God who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last could ever think about me. You know I must be something like a fly on a window pane to a God like that. And sometimes when I look at these great titles of the greatness of God, I wonder if it is possible for such a great God to think about me. And yet the text says, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” And so if we have any question about the fact that this great God who is the Alpha and the Omega thinks of us, this wonderful promise is surely the answer to that.

Mr. Spurgeon said, “Divine sovereignty is not opposed to the most generous promises of the gospel.” And we can talk about the greatness of God and his sovereign

election, but at the same time there are these wonderful promises I will give to him that is a thirst of the water of life. So we have no excuse do we? This invitation is offered to all, to all who are thirsty, they can come and have of the water of life. And notice, the apostle says he heard this voice from the throne, mind you, saying, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely,” freely. He didn't say if you join the church. He didn't say if you're baptized. He didn't say if you pray through. He didn't say if you're a good little girl and a good little boy. He didn't say if you were a leading man in the community. He didn't say if you had culture and education. He simply said if you are thirsty he will give of the water of life freely, freely. And if you question that he has the power to do it, I remind you he has just said that he is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. The one who is the Alpha and Omega can keep all of his promises so we do not have to worry if we come to him thirsty and say thank you Lord for the water of life, we can be sure we obtain it because the Alpha and the Omega is the one who gives it.

Now then John stops his discussion of the new heavens and the new earth in a general way and concentrates on the New Jerusalem. I wish I had time to talk about this great city. Cain built the first city in the word of God. It was a city in independence of God. Bismarck said that, “Great cities are often great sores on the body politic.” But this is one city which is not a great sore. This is one city in which the dependence of humanity upon God is recognized every second of the day. It is a city that is built upon the foundation of the apostles. It is built upon the foundation of the revelation of God and every single person in this city is a person whose heart rests in complete trust upon our great sovereign King our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the metropolis of the new creation. It is a literal city, but it is defined and described for us in symbolic language.

Now some of my friends debate with me over this and I'm sorry to have to say that they're wrong. I don't like to say that my friends are wrong, but sometimes my friends are wrong, and they are wrong here because this city while it is a real city and

while it is a literal city is nevertheless described by John in symbolical language. That means that the streets of heaven are not made out of fourteen karat gold. That's what that means. Now if you want to debate it with me, you can come up afterwards and I'll be glad to win the argument up here afterwards. But let me just point out one or two things so that you will be careful before you come to have some good reasons. I want you to notice that the 11th verse says this city has “the glory of God.” Then I want you to notice the 18th verse, “And the building of the wall of it was of jasper and the city was pure gold like clear glass.”

Now have you ever seen gold that is like clear glass? Have you ever seen transparent gold? No, you have not seen transparent gold. There is no such thing. The reason the apostle writes it this way, he says, “That the wall is one great wall of diamond.” He says that the “gates are all of pearl.” He says that the streets are all of gold because that's the only way he can say that this city is something that is so tremendous that you could hardly even imagine it. And so he uses the gems which represent for us the most precious things to describe that that which came to him in the vision, but when we look on to the reality, we must realize that we do not know what this city is going to look like. So I'm not going to walk on the streets of the New Jerusalem and look for a little sign that says fourteen karat gold, or twenty-one karat. It's something that is far more wonderful than the gold that we know to be gold. It's something far more wonderful than the pearl, something far more wonderful than the diamond. This city is an indescribable city. The only way in which he can even suggest its glory and its beauty is by the use of things which represent for us the most glorious things.

First chapter beginning with verse 22 through the 5th verse of the 22 chapter we have a description of the new paradise. That is life in this great city. And again it is almost impossible to expound it. We have the perfection of almost everything that is significant, the perfection of worship, the perfection of the knowledge of God, the perfection of many other things in this great city every one of us is going to be an Enoch.

Every one of us is going to be a Noah. We're all going to walk with God. All through the Old Testament only two men of whom it is said that they walked with God, but when the New Jerusalem comes and we enter that great city, it's going to be said of us that every one of us is a person who walks with God. And we're not only going to see the skirts of our God, as Moses did, or touch the hem of his garment, as the woman did, or fall at his feet, as Mary of Bethany did, we are going to be able to look right into the face of our Lord Jesus Christ and see his heart and understand him and know him and know the work that he has done for us.

And when we get to heaven, we are, all of us, going to be greater theologians than the greatest theologians who ever lived. Then you'll be able to criticize me, and you'll be able to come up to me and say, “Dr. Johnson you said you were right at such and such a thing, but now I see you were wrong, but now I see you were wrong.” And how do you feel about that? And you know when we get to heaven, in five minutes we will know more than Augustine knew. In five minutes we'll know more than John Calvin knew. In five minutes we'll know more than Lewis Sperry Chafer knew. In three minutes you'll know more than Lewis Johnson knew. You see you're going to be there and you're really going to know for you're going to see the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And it's going to be so wonderful too that we're not going to be back sliders up heaven. One moment we're following close after the Lord and enjoying the blessing of the Lord, the next moment we are back sliding and we are away from him. One moment we are hot with passion for the Lord. We have come to love him having confessed our sins and settled some of the things that he's had as issues in our lives. The next moment cold and indifferent as is our human existence. We're going to follow him. We're going to walk with him and walk with him constantly. You know I'm looking forward to that wonderful time when we shall be there. But I must hasten on because I did want to say something about eternal punishment.

Now eternal punishment is a terrible subject. Sometime I want to spend at least an entire message on this subject because it is so great and so important in the day in which we live. Will a loving God send anyone to hell? That's a parentally appropriate question. Will a loving God send anyone to hell? And here we surely need to have an open mind. Have you ever had anyone come to you with reasoning like this? Well now, just think for a moment. You're an earthly father, are you not? And you have children, do you not? Would you ever possibly take your children and expose them to the fires of eternal torment? No you couldn't possibly do that could you?

You're only an earthly father, think now of a Heavenly Father. Do you think a Heavenly Father could possibly expose his children to the fires of eternal torment? Do you know how I answer that? I do not think that we can know what a Heavenly Father will do other than from reading what he has said that he will do in his word. That's the only way that we can know what a Heavenly Father will do. And of course, we have to answer the question about who is the son of a Heavenly Father in the first place, for while the Bible states that we are all the offspring of God, the Bible does not say that we are sons of God, all of us. We are sons of God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And if we are genuine believers in him, then are we truly sons of God. And of course it is true that our loving Heavenly Father will not allow any of his sons, his genuine sons, to endure everlasting torment. But this is specious reasoning and we need to have the answers to it.

There is a whole denomination based upon this, the Universalist Denomination. It has not united with the Unitarian Denomination, and they make good bed fellows too, the Unitarians and the Universalists because in the Unitarian church you can believe anything, and in the Universalist's church you could believe everything that was good. In other words, everybody was ultimately going to be saved. You know that's a great doctrine to be able to preach isn't it? You would think that a denomination that was able to teach and to preach that all men are going to be saved ultimately would have a great following,

would you not? Do you know how many members they had before they joined with the Unitarians? They had seventy-three thousand members.

I remember hearing a statement once to this effect, that nobody is quite a Universalist in moments of indignation. Do you know what that means? That means that on the lips of those who say that everybody is going to heaven, you often hear go to hell. That's what that means. That means that deep down in the human heart there is no conviction what so ever that everybody is going to heaven. Deep down in the human heart there is a conviction that there has to be a hell. Mr. Browning said, “There may be a heaven. There must be a hell.” And he was a man who had read the facts of human existence.

Why do I believe in eternal punishment? Well I believe in the standpoint of nature. After all, God has spoken in nature, and he has spoken in the word of God. We should expect that the voice of nature agrees with the word of God. The Bible says very plainly of course that there is such a thing as eternal punishment. Does nature itself suggest it? Yes it does. Just think for a moment about the testimony of the physical universe. Just think about the beauties and the terrors of nature. Just think, for example, about the mountains. It's lovely to see the great mountains of the United States isn't it? It's lovely to see the great majestic mountains of the earth, but many of them are simply envelopes of volcanoes. And sometimes the mountain so majestic is one that is touched with a sense of the severity of God itself, and thousands are often destroyed by the volcanoes that come from our majestic and beautiful mountains.

We look up in the skies, our Texas skies, so blue, so beautiful, and then as we keep looking it's not long before there is forked lightning across the sky and someone has been electrocuted. You see the Bible speaks about the goodness and severity of God, and you can see it in nature. I can never forget when I saw the sea for the first time and thought what a wonderful creation this is of God, how beautiful, how majestic, how tremendous, how thrilling, and then I thought about a tidal wave, and it's not so thrilling

then. You look at the birds in the sky, the friendly robins and the beautiful jays and then all of a sudden there is a hawk that swoops down.

You see all throughout God’s nature there is a testimony to his severity and all you have to do is to think of the calamities that have come to the human race to realize that God speaks not only through the beauty of nature, but he also speaks through the cataclysms of nature as well. That should be very plain to us. That’s a message to us. As a matter of fact you can tell the behind nature there is fire. You look up in the sky, and you see the sun. It is nothing more than a conglomeration of fire itself. You see the stars that twinkle. You see the volcanoes of the earth. In other words, in nature itself there is a testimony to the fact that back of this human existence there exists conflagrations of fire and therefore I find it very easy to believe that ultimately there is to be a lake of fire and those who do not accept our Lord Jesus shall be cast into that lake of fire.

The theologians might have said to Noah when Noah said, “God is going to bring a flood, and he is going to destroy everyone on the earth except those who are in the ark.” They might have said, “God is a loving God. He wouldn't dare do anything like that.” But he did. But he did. We can know what God is going to do by what he has said and by what he has done, and so from the standpoint of nature itself I believe in eternal punishment. I also believe in eternal punishment because of the holiness of God. I do not believe that God is primarily loving. He is primarily holy. As a matter of fact holiness is the important attribute of God because you see holiness means his difference from us. The word holy means separated. When we say God is holy, we are saying he is not a man. He is different from us.

Now when we say God is love we are expressing one of his activities, and we are expressing a very important activity. He is love. He is of course life, and he is light. Do not forget it. As a matter of fact when Isaiah the prophet saw the Lord and he saw him high and lifted up he heard it said, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of hosts.” God is holy, holy, holy as if to impress upon us that this is the predominant attribute of God. He

is different from us. There is no other quality of God that is raised to the power of three in the word of God. He is holy, different, and consequently he will not allow sin to exist throughout his creation in the ages to come, and if that is true, if he is a holy God, if he is different, if he is absolutely perfect in his holiness then he cannot bare to have sin still active and also affecting his universe. He must destroy it, and he will surely do it.

I believe also in the eternal punishment of God because of the fact that sin is an infinite evil against God. If I went over to this young man here and slapped his face in a moment Mr. Nor may get up and strike me back, but after all that would probably be the end of it. But if the king of England or if the President of the United States were here and I were to go over and slap his face, something probably much more terrible would happen to me. You see my act and the degree of its evil is determined by the object against whom it is committed. And when we sin against God we are sinning against an infinite being. And sinning against an infinite being demands an infinite judgment, eternal punishment.

Furthermore I believe in eternal punishment because of the endlessness of evil. We often think today you know that well we can do something wrong today and tomorrow it's not quite as bad and if we wait a little while it's not nearly so bad as it was yesterday. And if we wait long enough everybody will have forgotten about it and it's alright now. I've often heard people in the church say this very, very wrong thing. When something takes place in the church that is wrong and which demands the discipline of God, some elders have said, "Now let's don't do anything about it. Let's just let it go because time will take care of it." Now that is a Hibernian view point. It is not scriptural. Time does not take care of sin. Sin is just as much sin tomorrow as it is today. It is just as much sin six months from now as it is today. It is just as much sin six years from now as it is today. It is just as guilty before God six millions years from today as it is from today. Time does not convert guilt into innocence, and consequently if a man has

rejected the only begotten Son of God, God's gift to us, that sin is of the very nature of it an infinite and eternal sin, and that eternal sin demands eternal judgment.

Do I have to talk about the word of God itself? There are many indirect statements that say this. “Now is the day of salvation.” “Now is the accepted time.” “There is no time after this now.” I read in the word of God that there is such a thing as an unpardonable sin. If it is an unpardonable sin then that means that there is eternal judgment because if it were pardonable six million years from now it could not be an unpardonable sin. I remember our Lord Jesus said about Judas, “The son of man goeth as it stands written concerning him, but woe unto that man through whom the son of man is betrayed. It had been better for that man if he had not been born. Now if Judas was ultimately going to find the presence of God, then it would not have been better for him that he had not been born because if he was ultimately to be saved everything else would be worth it. If he was ultimately there, “Who counts the bellows if the shore is won?” the poet has said.

I believe in eternal punishment because of these indirect statements. But the Bible also has some very terrible direct statements too. Let me just read a couple as I'm drawing near to the close now. Matthew chapter 25 and verse 46, the Lord Jesus himself states in this verse, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous unto life everlasting.” The same great adjective is used. If life eternal is forever then the punishment is also forever. “These shall go away into everlasting punishment. So our Lord Jesus is the authority forever lasting punishment. It is he who has said that the torment of those who die without Christ is forever and ever. They are in the fire which our Lord says shall never be quenched. “Their worm dieth not.” It is the lake of fire and it is the eternal second death. That is the teaching of the word of God. It is reasonable. It is logical. It is in harmony with his own creation. Therefore the consequences are inevitable. Those who are lost are doomed. There is a goodness in our God, and there is also severity in God.

I've heard it said that when we get to heaven there are going to be three surprises. Number one we are going to be surprised to find some people there that we thought were not going to be there. I think I agree with that. Then there was we are going to be surprised to find out that some are not there who we thought would surely be there. I think I agree with that. Then it has been said that we are going to be surprised thirdly that we are there. Now that is a thoroughly unscriptural statement. I'll be tremendously surprised if I find myself in hell some day, but I'll not be surprised to get to heaven because you see it is the word of our savior that guarantees that, and he has said through that Apostle Paul that, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” The doom of the lost is inevitable, inescapable, but the destiny of the saved is definite and sure. It's terrible to think that people with the issue so plain before them do not do anything about it.

This past week when I was in Charleston we were discussing the attitude of many of my friends and my fellow citizens of that city which has been so dear upon my heart for many years since it was the city in which I spent a great deal of a significant part of my life. I do not think that I know of any place in which there is less desire to know spiritual things than in a certain part of that city, the part of the city in which the finest people, according to the world's way of thinking, live. They are not interested at all in spiritual things. We were discussing it the other night. It is amazing how men can live their lives through and never for once really discuss and be concerned about the ultimate issue.

On Wednesday of this past week I called on an old friend. He faces a very serious operation. In fact his brother died from this operation just a few years ago. He has finally awakened. He is going to Huston in a couple of weeks in order to have this very serious operation. And he told me, he said, “You know Lewis, Wilma and I have begun to think, he's a man fifty years of age, Wilma and I have begun to think about spiritual things. It's terrible to think that a man has to be fifty years of age and facing

perhaps death in just a few weeks before he begins to think about spiritual things, the ultimate reality.

Suppose you were going to take a trip to Germany next month. What would you do? Why the first thing you would do would be to get everything you could possibly get your hands upon that had something to say about Germany wouldn't you? You'd go down to your travel agent and you'd find out everything about it. You'd get your passport. You would go through all of the details to make this trip. You'd make all the preparations wouldn't you? Why of course you would. You'd be stupid if you didn't do it.

And here you are going to make a trip into eternity, every one of you, every one of you, going to make this most important trip of all, and have you prepared for it? Have you made any preparation what so ever? Do you realize you might make it today? Have you gone to investigate the facts of the life beyond the grave at all? May God impress upon your heart the necessity of being prepared. It's very simple to be prepared. All you have to do is to look off to the Lord Jesus who died for you and say, “Thank you Lord for dying for me.” The moment you receive Jesus Christ as your personal savior you know the one who is the way the truth and the life and through whom you may come to the Father. May God bring you to him. Shall we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and gave himself for us and who has given us so many loving warnings in the word of God, fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit who woos us constantly toward him, and warns us of judgment to come, the love of God the Father who does not take delight in the eternal doom of those who are lost, be in abide...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]