



**Is Hell Real?**  
**Matthew 17:13-14**

**There are fewer blanks than usual in order to retain complete passage quotations.**

One day you'll \_\_\_\_\_ your eternal destiny. Will it be a day of \_\_\_\_\_ or will it be a day of \_\_\_\_\_? We know that if God \_\_\_\_\_ it, that it's true and significant. We're going to be judged one day by the \_\_\_\_\_ found in this book. The Bible is God \_\_\_\_\_ to us! We need to \_\_\_\_\_ what it says and to take it seriously. God doesn't tease or joke around when it comes to our \_\_\_\_\_.

Our study today deals with our eternal \_\_\_\_\_ after this life is over, and it should matter to you. We're all going to face an \_\_\_\_\_ destiny someday. According to a recent Pew Forum poll, 72 percent of Americans believe in \_\_\_\_\_, but only 58 percent believe in \_\_\_\_\_. Only a few people believe they will be \_\_\_\_\_ in hell. It would be \_\_\_\_\_ to think you're saved when in fact you're not. While most folks know there is a hell, they \_\_\_\_\_ it. If we could open the \_\_\_\_\_ of the dead and ask them about Hades, that unseen place where the spirits of the dead go, we might be more inclined to think about our future. Whether they were in a place of comfort or a place of torment, they would say with one loud, clear voice, "Do everything you can to \_\_\_\_\_ God and go to heaven; and do everything you can to stay out of this place of torment." I wonder if we take our afterlife seriously enough. Moses said in Deuteronomy 32:29, "Would that they were \_\_\_\_\_, that they understood this, that they would discern their \_\_\_\_\_!" What will happen to us when we die? The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27 it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes \_\_\_\_\_.

**Our reading today comes from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself as He was speaking in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:13-14.** That is a surprising passage for many.

The Lord Jesus said, "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who've done good to the resurrection of life, and those who've done evil to the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29). At the resurrection, we will stand before the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus our Lord. Jesus said, "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious \_\_\_\_\_. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will \_\_\_\_\_ them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He'll put the sheep on His right, and the goats on His left. And then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (Matthew 25:31-34). Verse 41 continues: "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Verse 46 says: "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

There are two destinies \_\_\_\_\_ the resurrection and judgment; the blessed one with joy in heaven, and the other is hell. The word hell or *gehenna* appears \_\_\_\_\_ times in Scripture,

mostly from the lips of Jesus. Some people think preaching hell is \_\_\_\_\_ or uncouth, but Jesus preached on it because people \_\_\_\_\_ to hear about it. Heaven and hell ought to be \_\_\_\_\_ to us since we'll spend eternity in one place or the other. I find no joy in thinking about the final end of unbelievers or sinners.

God said, "Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no \_\_\_\_\_ in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11). Perhaps you remember the broken heart of Jesus as he \_\_\_\_\_ over Jerusalem. He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Matthew 23:37). There are people who will not come to the Lord, people who will not \_\_\_\_\_ of their sins, people who will not \_\_\_\_\_ the truth, and will not serve God. It breaks God's heart to think about the \_\_\_\_\_ they have made. Jesus could have remained \_\_\_\_\_ about hell and just let them perish, but he did not do that. If hell is real, it's \_\_\_\_\_ not to tell people about it. Cruel preachers \_\_\_\_\_ the subject. That's why Jesus spoke on the matter—He did it out of \_\_\_\_\_ and out of truth.

**Read the warnings of our Lord in Mark 9:43-48.** Jesus warns us about the consequences of \_\_\_\_\_. It's worse to be \_\_\_\_\_ in sin than to lose an eye, or a hand, or a foot. On another occasion Jesus warned, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can \_\_\_\_\_ both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Dying is tragic, but it's even more tragic to be lost in \_\_\_\_\_.

When the Bible speaks of the eternal punishment of sinners or unbelievers, it uses phrases such as "outer darkness," "weeping and gnashing of teeth," an "unquenchable fire," or an "eternal fire, and "the place where the worm does not die." Hell is the place of complete separation from God.

Paul describes the second coming of Jesus as a frightening one for those who \_\_\_\_\_ God. Jesus will come again to \_\_\_\_\_ His followers, but He'll also come to \_\_\_\_\_ those who reject Him. This inspired apostle said, "and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven 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. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Can you imagine how \_\_\_\_\_ it would be to spend eternity separated from God? God closes his \_\_\_\_\_ to their prayers in eternity because they have closed their \_\_\_\_\_ toward Him in this life.

What can you expect of the future? That depends on you. The Bible says, "He will render to each one according to his \_\_\_\_\_: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does \_\_\_\_\_, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality" (Romans 2:6-11). Those who choose to rebel against God and to ignore Him will indeed

\_\_\_\_\_ eternal punishment according to Matthew 25:46.

The Bible warns us about where sin will lead. Hebrews 10:26-27 says, “For if we go on sinning deliberately (willfully) after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.” Verse 31 concludes, “It’s a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Some people ask if hell is really \_\_\_\_\_. The New Testament uses the words *aion* and *aionios*—eternity and eternal—141 times to speak about someone or something that is unceasing, endless, or perpetual. If the word eternal means “without end” when applied to the blessings of eternal \_\_\_\_\_, it must also mean “without end” when describing the eternal punishment of the lost.

The Bible describes our eternal punishment, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or his hand, he will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name” (Revelation 14:9-11).

Someone at this point asks, “Well, isn’t all this just a \_\_\_\_\_ of speech?” There are many figures of speech in the Bible. Many people fall into doctrinal \_\_\_\_\_ because they interpret a passage literally when they should interpret it figuratively, or they interpret it figuratively when it should be understood literally. Many think because a passage is figurative that this somehow \_\_\_\_\_ what the passage is trying to say. But this is not right at all. Jesus did not use figures of speech to \_\_\_\_\_ what he was saying. He used them to \_\_\_\_\_ the points he was making. He felt it important enough to emphasize it with a figure of speech. Because He wanted people to remember what He had to say is why He sometimes uses figures of speech.

We learn a little more about this \_\_\_\_\_ punishment in Revelation 20:13-15. The Bible says, “And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” I can’t imagine anything \_\_\_\_\_ than going to hell; it’s a horrible thought. I don’t wish that for anybody. The only thing worse would be that I \_\_\_\_\_ someone else to go there. It’s not just you or me that’s involved here; when you choose to do evil, you may lead someone \_\_\_\_\_ to do evil; it’s often those who we love and who we influence.

At this point somebody says, “Well, how can a \_\_\_\_\_ God send anyone to hell and punish them forever?” This is an important question and it deserves an \_\_\_\_\_. First, God didn’t make hell for people, for humans; according to Matthew 25:41 He made Hell for the \_\_\_\_\_ and his angels. If anyone is lost, it’s by his own \_\_\_\_\_ to follow the devil by giving in to sin. Hell is filled with people who either ignore God or live in rebellion toward God and His \_\_\_\_\_.

Second, God must punish sin to be \_\_\_\_\_ and righteous. When sinners follow evil, they become \_\_\_\_\_ to sin. When people become unchangeably set in their thinking and their ways, they’ll likely always wish God would just go away and quit interfering with their lives. They

can actually begin to \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness.

Third, God has done everything possible to \_\_\_\_\_ us from being lost. He's given us the Bible to teach us; He's given us the church to help us; He sent His Son as a sacrifice for us. Before you \_\_\_\_\_ God is unloving, remember that He sacrificed His Son for you, and Jesus suffered terribly on the cross for you. The Lord Jesus didn't suffer for his \_\_\_\_\_ sins, but for your sins and mine. Jesus has demonstrated beyond question His great \_\_\_\_\_ by dying on the cross for us. He died in our place; He bore the punishment we should have received. The Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all, so that we could live free from sin and \_\_\_\_\_ with Him forever. He took our place on the cross so that we could be set \_\_\_\_\_ from sin and death. If God had not provided an answer for hell, we'd all be in a sorrowful condition; but Jesus sacrificed His body on the cross to give us a solution to the threat of hell; He did it willingly; and He gave it to us freely. God hasn't left you without \_\_\_\_\_. You don't have to be lost. You can go to heaven if you'll love and serve the Lord Jesus.

Each day you're choosing whether you want to \_\_\_\_\_ closer to the Lord or whether you're going to \_\_\_\_\_ away from Him. If you wish to have a home with God in heaven, you need to let God have a home in your \_\_\_\_\_ and your \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23). Could God make His \_\_\_\_\_ with you? Do you love God? Are you living in obedience to His Word? Have you given God even a second thought? Are you for Him, or living in rebellion to His Word? What are you choosing for your \_\_\_\_\_ destiny?

The Bible says that God "desires \_\_\_\_\_ people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3-4). Jesus came to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ that which was lost so that they might not go to that place. Jesus chose twelve apostles and gave the \_\_\_\_\_ the task of taking the gospel to every person. Because He doesn't want you to be \_\_\_\_\_ eternally, he wants you for his own. I have no desire to see anyone lost, and that's why I have spent my whole life \_\_\_\_\_ the good news of Jesus Christ. That's why churches of Christ and many individuals \_\_\_\_\_ this program. We're in the \_\_\_\_\_ business, teaching people about the love of God and the blood of Christ. Part of preaching is helping people to see how sin \_\_\_\_\_ us, but the other part is telling how God has opened a \_\_\_\_\_ of hope and forgiveness for them.

The loss of your soul is the \_\_\_\_\_ thing that can happen to you. I don't have words to describe the hopelessness and the horror of that place the Scriptures call "hell." Rather than ignore the Scriptures or reject the Lord, listen to His \_\_\_\_\_ and come to Him. I pray that you'll come to Him by loving and \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord Jesus, \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins, by \_\_\_\_\_ Him publicly to all, and by being \_\_\_\_\_ in water for the remission of your sins. When you do this, the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus will cleanse you. You may have become a Christian many years ago but maybe in more recent years you've rebelled against Him. You need to come \_\_\_\_\_ to Him. I want everyone, everywhere to be a citizen of heaven. One day the only question that will matter will be whether we hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant," or "Depart from me, you worker of lawlessness." My friend, what will you hear? What will you hear?