

## **Is Hell a Literal Place? Matthew 11-13**

### **Introduction:**

1. Many people shun the idea of a literal hell. Some laugh, some mock, some ridicule any person who dares to believe in and teach about a literal hell. Even many pastors avoid the subject all together.
2. But many believers **and** unbelievers are very curious about this subject. They hear the word used all the time as a cuss word, but really know little about what the Bible actually says about this subject.
3. But just like the subject of heaven, when it comes to this subject, the character of our Savior is at stake. During His earthly ministry, Jesus talked about hell and described it in literal terms.
4. Like we said last week, you cannot believe that Jesus was even a good man or a good teacher and not believe in hell.
5. If hell is not real, then Jesus was a phony and a liar, and nothing He said or did really matters. The truthfulness of our Savior is at stake.
6. Just like Jesus taught that there was a place of eternal bliss called heaven, He also taught that there was a place of eternal punishment called hell.
7. What exactly did Jesus teach about this subject?

### **Hell is a literal place.**

1. There are some who believe in hell as an idea or a concept. They believe that hell is figurative. It describes a non-pleasant environment or set of circumstances. "I had a meeting with my boss and it was hell."
2. But Jesus did not talk about hell this way. He described it as a literal place. Matthew 11:23; 13:49-50; 23:15
3. Some teach that hell is simply a reference to the grave. But this is not what Jesus taught. Matthew 10:28
  - After I'm dead, why would I fear somebody throwing me into a grave?

### **Hell was created for the devil.**

1. Prior to becoming the adversary of God, the devil was once the chief angelic being over God's angelic host, but he got filled with pride and

- wanted to be **like** the most high God (power). When he rebelled and devised his plan of evil, he promoted this plan to the angelic host.
2. Many of those angels believed in his plan and made a choice to follow him. In order to stop the angelic rebellion, God created a place of punishment so severe that it would stop the rebellion dead in its tracks. Matthew 25:41
  3. Notice that God did not initially intend for people to go to hell. But when mankind joined in on Satan's rebellion (sin entered the human race as it did the angelic host), this was the natural result.
    - If you make a choice to **not** follow God and to follow Satan's plan of evil, you will follow him straight to his future destination.
  4. People ask, "Why would a loving God send somebody to hell?" God is love, but He is also just, righteous, and holy. And every person is given a free will to make choices. God is not in the robot business.
  5. God has offered heaven as a free gift through His Son, but if people reject that gift, they choose their own eternal destiny.
  6. Hell demonstrates the wrath of God toward sin. This is why Christ died on the cross. He bore our wrath and judgment so that we wouldn't have to bear it. When we understand the wrath of God against sin and the undeniable reality of hell, it magnifies grace and causes people to appreciate it.

### **Hell is a place of punishment.**

1. Remember, it was created to serve as a deterrent to those who would follow Satan's destructive plan of evil and rebellion against God.
2. This is why Jesus was very straightforward and honest about hell. He doesn't want anybody to go there. He described it as a place of torment and fire. Matthew 13:41-42; Mark 9:43-44; Luke 16:23
3. Punishment is to serve as a deterrent to wrongdoing.
  - Example: Thank God our government severely punishes murderers (Romans 13:4). They aren't meant for doing this. Imagine if there was no punishment for crime.
4. Satan's plan of evil is so deceptive. He makes it look so pleasing, and if it were not for the fact that people knew they had to face God one day and be punished, everybody would follow Satan and end up destroyed.

## **Hell is eternal.**

1. Here are some phrases that Jesus used to describe hell:
  - “...*everlasting fire*.” **Matthew 25:41**
  - “...*everlasting punishment*.” **Matthew 25:46**
  - “...*eternal damnation*.” **Mark 3:29**
2. Paul called it, “...*everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*.” **2 Thessalonians 1:9**
  - The word, “*everlasting*” is the Greek word "ion." How long is this? Luke 1:31-33 uses this word and defines it for us as having no end. It means forever.
3. In Revelation 19:20, the anti-Christ and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire and 1,000 years later, they are still there.  
Revelation 20:10
4. Just like heaven is eternal and is a place for those who decided to follow the true God, hell is eternal and is a place for those who choose to follow Satan’s plan of evil.

## **In Conclusion:**

1. As we have seen in God's Word, hell is a literal place with a literal geographic location. It is a literal place, just like heaven is a literal place.
2. We cannot bury our heads in the sand and act like it doesn't exist.
3. You can say that you do not believe in hell, but not believing in something doesn’t change reality.
4. If you don’t believe the testimony of God’s Word, you are forced to wrestle with several facts. Jesus taught that there was such a place. So what are you going to do with Jesus Christ? What will you believe about Him?
5. Also, you must face the fact that you really will not know for sure until you die, and at that point it is too late to do anything about it.
6. Just remember, who you follow determines where you end up.  
Revelation 14:9-11; 7:14-17
7. If a person chooses to follow Satan's path of rebellion and spurn God's offer of eternal life through Christ, they will wind up in the same place as Satan. God loves you enough to tell you exactly where you will end up.

8. But God, in His love, has made a way out for every person on this earth. He sent His only begotten Son that we might have eternal life.
9. Jesus suffered our eternal judgment for us on the cross. The debt has been paid. Have you accepted it? Have you believed on Christ?