

Hell in the Ages to Come (Part 3)

Introduction:

1. We have learned that hell is a real place. Its geographic location is in the heart of the earth.
2. Hell was originally created for the devil and the angels that followed him in his rebellion against God. But when Adam sinned and also joined the rebellion, the danger of hell entered into the human race. Throughout the ages, man has had to decide if he would follow God's Word or join Satan in his plan of rebellion.
3. In time past, hell was composed of two compartments: a paradise side for the saved, and a torment side for the lost. Today, because of Christ's finished work on the cross, saints go straight to the third heaven, and there is no paradise side of hell.
4. But what about when this dispensation of grace ends when the rapture occurs? In the ages to come, will there be changes to hell? The answer is "yes." There **will** be changes, and we will study those tonight in God's Word.
5. Remember, after the rapture, Christ will return seven years later to establish His kingdom on this earth. He will rule and reign as King of kings over the entire earth, and all nations will have to worship and obey Christ. Zechariah 14:9, 16
6. Of course, during Christ's earthly ministry, His focus was preparing Israel for this coming kingdom. Let's read Mark 9:43-47.
 - Notice how Christ uses the word "*life*" and "*kingdom*" interchangeably in verses 43 and 47.
 - For Israel, life was synonymous with a kingdom. For time past saints, what was their hope? It wasn't heaven, but rather life for them had to do with entering a kingdom, and the opportunity to live forever in that kingdom with their Messiah ruling over this earth.
 - Christ said that it is better to enter into the kingdom maimed (coming out of the tribulation) than to be cast into hellfire. This passage links the issue of Christ's coming, His kingdom, and hell, all together.
7. The reason why Jesus had so much to say about hell is because it will be an integral part of His kingdom reign on this earth. There will be a literal, visible lake of fire during Christ's kingdom reign on this earth. Let's answer several questions about this.

Will there be a literal lake of fire during Christ's kingdom?

1. In the passage we read in Mark 9, did you notice that the text reads in a way that it is as if somebody can actually pick you up, take you over, and cast you into hell? cf. Matthew 5:29-30
2. In Matthew 25:41 & 46, we see the same idea. Christ has returned and is sitting on His throne on the earth. He gathers up people from nations and separates the sheep (saved) from the goats (lost). The lost are cast into everlasting fire and the saved go into the kingdom on earth.

3. In Isaiah 66:23-24, the nations are seen coming to Jerusalem to worship Christ. When they come, they will actually be able to look upon this lake of fire where the ungodly, unbelievers were cast. You didn't know Jesus was quoting Isaiah in the Mark 9 passage, did you?
4. In Isaiah 14, when the antichrist is brought down to hell (vs. 15), it says, *“They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms.”*
 - Hell will be a visible reality for people to look down upon in the kingdom. Again, this is why Jesus had so much to say about it during His earthly ministry to Israel.
5. This is also why Revelation 14:9-11 states that those in the lake of fire are *“tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb,”* and *“the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.”*
 - The context is Christ's millennial kingdom on earth (there is still day and night). Christ is on the throne in Jerusalem, and the lake of fire is there in close proximity.

Why will there be a literal lake of fire during Christ's kingdom?

1. During Christ's kingdom, hell will be a present reality for people on the earth to look at as a monument to the wrath of almighty God against sin. God has wrath and hostility towards sin. He is righteous, and sin offends the integrity of God (His justice), so God moves in justice to take away the offending thing.
 - Judgment is the execution of justice against sin. The justice of God must be satisfied. Only the cross work of Christ satisfies that justice and satisfies that payment and debt.
 - So, this lake of fire will be a visible and present reality on earth for people to look upon and view, and see as a vivid reminder of God's attitude towards sin.
2. The character of Christ's rule on earth will be one of righteousness and justice (Isaiah 11:5; Jeremiah 23:5-6). This righteousness and justice will be executed swiftly against those who dare to rebel against the King.
 - If a person commits a capital offense in Christ's kingdom, there will not be years and years of sitting in an air-conditioned prison, watching TV, playing games, and making appeal after appeal.
 - Christ will judge in perfect knowledge and righteousness, and the punishment won't be a lethal injection or the electric chair, but rather, the lake of fire.
3. In the Old Testament, Jews had to come three times a year to Jerusalem to present themselves before the Lord. Of course, in the present dispensation of grace, that program has been suspended.
4. But, in the kingdom, there will be a constant procession of nations that will have to come and worship Christ as they participate in the Abrahamic Blessing and Covenant. Isaiah 2:2-5; Zechariah 14:16

- The way a man will stay alive in that kingdom will be by doing what the King says to do. Of course, we know that there will be an underground rebellion, and not every person will obey by faith.
5. As people come to worship Christ in Jerusalem, the lake of fire will be a visible reminder of what happens when you rebel against Christ. This will be a motivator!
 6. There will be a political reign of complete righteousness over the entire earth!

Where will this lake of fire be located, and how will it get there?

1. When Christ returns to this earth at the end of the tribulation, the antichrist and the false prophet will be thrown alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). Where is this lake of fire? How does it come into being? The Bible answers these questions for us.
2. When Christ returns, His garments will be stained with blood (not His own, but the blood of His enemies). Revelation 19:13
3. According to Isaiah 63:1-4, this occurs in Edom and Bozrah (the royal city of Edom). This is an area in the southern part of Israel, south of the Dead Sea. This is the area where the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were located before God consumed them with fire.
4. This land area is mentioned again in Isaiah 34:5-10, which is a passage dealing with Christ's Second Coming. vs. 2
 - "Idumea" is the Greek name for "Edom." The context is the Second Coming of Christ, the day of the Lord's vengeance. vs. 8
 - God says He has planned a great sacrifice in this place, and when He gets to this place, His garments will be soaked with blood. vs. 5-7
5. Notice God's prophecy for this land area in verses 9-10. The land will become burning pitch.
 - Pitch is a mineral substance consisting chiefly of hydrogen and carbon, and highly flammable. This land will burn with pitch and brimstone. Brimstone is a bright yellow mineral that is highly combustible.
 - Interesting note: Large deposits of mineral pitch, asphalt, and brimstone have been found in this land area around the Dead Sea.
 - Notice that Christ will set this land area on fire, and it will not be quenched night nor day (vs. 10), and the smoke goes up forever. This land area is forever uninhabited. What does this sound like to you? An unquenchable fire? Smoke that goes up forever? Brimstone? Compare this with Revelation 14:10-11.
6. When Christ returns to this earth, there is a definite path that He will take. On this path, He will come through this land of Edom, and fire will proceed out of His mouth. He will literally set this area on fire, creating a lake of fire for everybody to see and behold.

7. Let's read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, 2:8. Why is it bright?
 - When He returns in fire, it starts an eternal fire on earth that burns down into hell. There will be a literal opening on the earth that you can look down upon and see. The entrance to hell is there now, we simply cannot see it. Christ will open it up at His coming.
8. Let's read Psalm 50:1-3, 97:1-6.
 - When Christ comes, there will be a fire devouring things before Him, in His presence. There will be geographical effects on this earth. cf. Isaiah 30:27-28, 30-31, 33; Nahum 1:5-6; Micah 1:3-4; Joel 2:1-3
 - Mountains will melt like wax, and run like a molten lava river. The whole earth will be shaken up at Christ's Second Coming.
9. According to Deuteronomy 32:22, there are tiers or layers of hell that go down into the earth, and when Christ returns He will kindle a fire that will burn down into the lowest hell.
 - There is an opening that leads into hell, and a door with a gate and bars that leads into this place called hell. You can't see it right now because it is all covered with earth. But at Jesus Christ's return, He will burn up that land area, open it up, and leave it open so that people can look into it.
10. In Revelation 9:1-2, an angel has a key to this place and opens the door to it. There is a door, a way to get to the door, and a shaft that leads to it. There is a way to get there. It is not a figment of somebody's imagination. It is just as real as you are.
 - Right now, hell and all the compartments of hell are invisible to the fleshly eye, but the angels know right where it is, where the opening is, and how to get there. Revelation 20:1-3
11. But at Christ's second coming, Christ will come through the land area of Edom and literally set it on fire. There will be tremendous topographical changes that take place, and this area will burn down into hell itself, and people will see it.
12. Now do you see why Christ had so much to say about hell? It will be an integral, literal, visible part of His kingdom on this earth. It will demonstrate in a visible and real way the wrath and hostility that God has against sin and rebellion.
13. As the nations come to worship Christ in the millennium, they will walk around this lake of fire and see the smoke going up, and will be a constant reminder to not disobey the Word of God, because judgment is severe.