

SERIES TITLE: BIBLE ANSWERS

PART FOUR: ABOUT HELL

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:49-50

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

This series addresses some frequently asked questions. The four subjects are: The Tribulation, Paranormal Activity, Predestination, and Hell. We will look at what the Bible has to say about each of these topics, and how the truth applies to our lives today.

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

Jesus references the concept of “hell” repeatedly in his teachings. Here, Jesus teaches his disciples about the kingdom of heaven through multiple parables. Featured prominently in these teachings is the efforts of the devil to thwart kingdom growth. The consequences of allowing the devil to work through us becomes clear as well.

FOCUS QUESTION

If you grew up in a church, did you hear more or less about hell then than you do now?
If it is different, why do you think that is?

EXAMINATION

Rather than study what the entire Bible says about hell, we will focus on the words of Jesus that that speak to five principles:

1. Jesus taught that there was a place of judgment after death.

- Matthew 23:33. Look at the rest of the chapter and discover all the reasons why Jesus said these people were going to hell.
- Luke 12:4-5 What point is Jesus making? Does Jesus present hell as a real place?

2. Jesus taught that the wicked experience conscious punishment after death.

- Matthew 13:49-50 Why would Jesus use fiery furnace as an image of hell?
- Matthew 22:13 What is similar and what is different in this image?
- Matthew 24:51 What indicates that the punishment is conscious and continuous?

3. Jesus taught that punishment after death is endless and unrelenting.

- Matthew 25:41, 46 Why should we assume that the word translated “eternal” means forever?

- Matthew 18:8-9 What does the eternality of the fire have to do with Jesus' point?
- Mark 9:47-48 Although similar to the previous text, this time Jesus mentions worms and unquenchable fire. What is the message?

4. Jesus taught that the wicked are not redeemed by hell's punishments.

- Luke 16:19-31 What is the rich man like even when in hell?
- Why do you think he doesn't ask to get out?
- What parts of the story argue against any possibility of release from hell?

5. Jesus taught that whoever believes will not be condemned.

- John 3:17-18 What is the only escape from condemnation?
- John 5:24 On what is this promise based?

EXPLORATION

- Psalm 9:7-9, 15-18
- Matthew 10:16-28
- Matthew 25:41-46
- Revelation 20:11-15
- Revelation 21:1-8

APPLICATION.

- Read these quotations about hell and discuss how they do or don't fit Jesus' words:
 - a) What happens when we lose the presence of God? Isolation like darkness and disintegration like fire. Away from the favor and face of God, we horrifically and endlessly fall apart.
 - b) Tim Keller: "Hell is your freely chosen identity, based on something else besides God going on forever."
 - c) C. S. Lewis: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell, choose it."

d) D. A. Carson: "Hell will not be full of deeply repentant and sorry sinners who are eager to get out. It is full of people who are still justifying themselves, still defying God, still hating him, tearing down relationships, being resentful, and continue in an endless cycle of brokenness shame, guilt and defiance, without repentance."

- How does the doctrine of hell help you understand and appreciate the love of God?

SUMMATION

- Fact: What is a key truth that you understood from this passage?
- React: What did you feel?
- Act: What are you going to do?