



## Hell's Biggest Party

***Isaiah 14:9*** – *“Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.”*

### I. INTRODUCTION -- WHAT AMERICA THINKS ABOUT HELL

-Hell has fallen on hard times. A recent George Barna survey found that 67% of Americans do not believe in hell. That means that only 33% of Americans believe in a literal hell.

-Couple that idea with a rapidly declining biblical knowledge and in just a few short years there will be no hell. . . . At least in the minds of Americans.

-Hell is being “frozen out” by many preachers who downplay damnation in their sermons. According to a lengthy report June 19, 2002 in *The Los Angeles Times*, the mention of hell from pulpits is at “an all-time low” as a result of the influence of secularism on Christian theology.

*-“There has been a shift in religion from focusing on what happens in the next life to asking, ‘What is the quality of this life we’re leading now?’” said Harvey Cox Jr., an author, religious historian and professor at the Harvard Divinity School. “You can go to a whole lot of churches week after week, and you’d be startled even to hear a mention of hell.”*

-I think that sometimes we are even startled to hear about hell here. In fact, it is now November 3, 2002. The last sermon that I can recall being entirely related to the subject of Hell was in March, eight months ago, when we had our youth revival with Bro. Kenny Gurley.

*-The Los Angeles Times* said the tendency to forsake the fire and brimstone “has grown in recent years as nondenominational ministries, with their focus on everyday issues such as child-rearing and career success, have proliferated and loyalty to churches has deteriorated.”

*-“It’s just too negative,” said Bruce Shelley, a senior professor of church history at the Denver Theological Seminary. “Churches are under enormous pressure to be consumer-oriented. Churches today feel the need to be appealing rather than demanding.”*

-But despite what the popular preachers and theologians of our seminaries say about hell, they forget what the greatest preacher who ever lived had to say. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke about Hell twice as much as He did about Heaven. There was only one subject that He dealt with more and that was money.

-Suffice it to say, if the Lord thought it important enough to speak about then I too am bound by that same task. The doctrine of Hell was not a doctrine that was developed by Paul, or Peter, or even John. The certainty of Hell was clearly established by Jesus Christ.

*-Billy Graham was quoted in the Los Angeles Times article as saying that he could not any longer, in good conscience preach about a literal, burning hell. He felt that (inaccurately I might add) hell was more a separation from God than a literal place. He said that the thirst which the rich man in Luke 16 experienced was an unquenchable thirst for God that could not be filled and that would remain with him for eternity.*

*-Billy Graham said that hellfire and brimstone preaching was good for the ‘40’s and ‘50’s but is no longer good for the new millennium. It is funny how we change because in the late ‘50’s, Mr. Graham was quoted like this, “If there was more hell in the pulpit there would be less hell in the pew.”*

-Yes, indeed, hell is having a bad day. Hell is being frozen out. But regardless of what our genteel “Christian” society thinks about hell, their opinions and views neither destroys hell nor changes the fact of it’s existence.

## II. OUR TEXT IN ISAIAH

-Isaiah 14 is a description of what happened to Satan. It gives to us what happens when pride begins it’s evil work of destruction. There is a pit waiting on evil.

-Consider with me some other renderings of this verse in various translations:

***Isaiah 14:9*** -- *Hell from beneath is excited about you, To meet you at your coming; It stirs up the dead for you, All the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones All the kings of the nations. New King James Version*

***Isaiah 14:9*** *9 Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come, it rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations. Revised Standard Version*

-But this rendering from the Living Bible should strike something in all our hearts. . . . Listen carefully:

***Isaiah 14:9-11*** -- *9 The denizens of hell crowd to meet you as you enter their domain. World leaders and earth's mightiest kings, long dead, are there to see you. 10 With one voice they all cry out, "Now you are as weak as we are!" 11 Your might and power are gone; they are buried with you. All the pleasant music in your palace has ceased; now maggots are your sheet, worms your blanket! The Living Bible*

## III. THE BOOK OF LUKE

-When we look at the book of Luke there is a story there that is bigger than life. It gives us some insight as to the world beyond this one.

-In Luke 14, one finds a chapter rife with the lessons that come to the “haves” and “have nots.” Lessons of humility are taught by the Lord. He speaks of honored seats and points of exaltation but also of points of abasement.

-In Luke 15, one finds the poverty of the small shepherd who lost one sheep and was willing to risk all to save it. One finds the poverty of the woman who lost a single coin and turned over her world looking for it. One finds the poverty of the man who lost one of his sons.

-If the shepherd had been a large rancher, nothing would be lost over one sheep. If the woman would have had plenty, nothing would have been lost over one single coin. If the man would have had a small heart, he would have forgotten the lost son. But all of them were steeped in the ways of the lowly. Therefore their small losses were much more highly valued.

-Then, and only in the book of Luke (Luke 16), the Lord starts with the shady story of a crooked manager who shrewdly used his master’s money to buy friends for himself after he lost his job. The moral of the sordid tale struck the hearts of the Pharisees because they were covetous and lovers of money. . . . they scoffed at Him (16:14). Then He concludes Luke 16 with the most troubling tale of all, the rich man and Lazarus.

## IV. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

### A. Life’s Greatest Loss

-Within this riveting story that the Lord would give of the Rich Man and Lazarus, one finds lodged within the story the greatest gain of all, which is Heaven. But one also finds the greatest loss of all, the soul of a man.

-Each of the Evangelists that it important enough to mention the words of the Lord:

***Matthew 16:26*** -- *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

***Mark 8:36*** -- *“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”*

***Luke 9:25*** -- *“For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?”*

-Your greatest losses in this life are not the things that you possess. Your greatest and most guarded possession must be your soul. Life is made up not of what you possess but what possesses you.

**Hebrews 9:27 -- "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"**

-The first sermon of Jesus and the last sermon of Jesus have the same message. In the first sermon, the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), Jesus calls for us to choose between the rock and the sand. In the last sermon (Matt. 24-26), Jesus calls for us to choose between Heaven and Hell.

**B. The Rich Man**

-This rich man lost his soul gradually. The accumulation of the things of his life came over the course of time. The Bible never mentions that he was dishonest about how he had gained a temporal kingdom. But his greatest mistake appears to be the fact that he invested himself in things confined to time while negligence nibbled away his time when it came to the crucial matters of the soul.

-There was nothing that he could not afford in this life. He had it all and what he did not have, he had access to it. But while he was down here, there was an unseen world above that he was seemingly unaware of.

-I do not think that the rich man was necessarily a bad man. In fact it appears, if anything, he was somewhat concerned about Lazarus. Every day, crumbs were sent out to him. These crumbs were large and tasty for the Bible declares that Lazarus lay at the rich man's gate for an extended period of time.

**1. The Caddis Worm**

In many of the rapid flowing streams in the countryside of England there is a very slender worm called the caddis worm. It gathers around itself a compact cocoon of little bits of sand, rock, sticks, and any substance that happens to float past it. In this case it hides itself and will attach itself to the bottom of the stream and resists the force of the current. This case is many times the size of its own body and when you reach to pull it into pieces, and reach the worm inside, you will be very surprised to find how thin and small it really is. How little living material there is at the heart of all this great mass of sand and rock. It is often so of those who pass in this life. The things that encase our lives are the bulk of our existence. Take away the case and you find how tiny and small the life really is.

-Obviously those who carried Lazarus to the gate thought that this was the best place for him. They had probably tried other places but found that this was the best place for Lazarus. No matter what place that life brings you to, there is a Lazarus at your gate that needs your assistance.

-Our holdings in this life are on a very short tenure. Death will strip them from us as robbers steal from a traveller.

-Often the concept of a man investing here with the payoff to come in the afterlife is foolishness to most. For that reason, that is why most never invest in things that they cannot see growing. Men invest in buildings, properties, businesses, and in the trading of stocks, because those are things that they can track the growth in.

-For that reason, that is why the majority of this world and sometimes that majority of the church never invest themselves in avenues of prayer and fasting, never open up the treasures in the Word of God, never are concerned with efforts of witnessing, never a hunger for revival, and never a hunger for growth. Let's just stay right where we are, stay comfortable, don't talk to me like that preacher. Leave me alone with my miserly holdings down here.

-But there came a day that the rich man died. The man who gained the whole world ended up losing his soul. When he died he left it all behind him.

- He is torn from the body that he had pampered.
- He is torn from the treasures that he had amassed and now they amount to nothing.
- He is torn from the forms that he once worshipped for they are lost.
- He is to enter into a world of spiritual and eternal realities with which he has nothing in common and he has not prepared himself to face.

### **C. The Contrasts Between the Rich Man and Lazarus**

-In their external circumstances:

- One was rich, the other was a beggar.
- One was clothed in elegance, the other in rags.
- One was fed sumptuously, the other existed on crumbs.
- One in health, the other in a wretched physical state.
- One moved in the high social circles, the other in beggarly isolation.

-In their spiritual conditions:

- One exulted in his wealth, the other content in his poverty.
- One satisfied with his earthly possessions, the other longing for a heavenly treasure.
- One selfish and ungodly, the other a self-sacrificing believer.
- One had great possessions but one thing he lacked and that one thing was needful. The other “as having nothing, yet possessing all things.”

-In their eternal destiny:

- One cast into hell, the other carried into heaven.
- One tormented, the other comforted.
- One associated with demons, the other in fellowship with Abraham.
- One in absolute anguish, the other in permanent peace.

-Another of the greatest lessons that we learn from this narrative is that Lazarus very easily could have been in Hell with the rich man. His temptations were just as great as the rich man's. He could have very easily become embittered and complained with such a wrath as to find fault with both man and God. Lazarus had Asaph's temptation of Psalm 73 over and over again. To consider the prosperity of the wicked and allow it to overcome his soul.

### **V. THE FOUR FLAMES OF HELL**

-The Lord uses the symbol of the flame, the blistered tongue, and the cry for water, the separation, and the unanswered prayer.

***Revelation 20:14-15** -- "And death and hell 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."*

The word "lake" must connote a body of matter having liquid form. This eternal fire must be in liquid form. The very simple proofs of Scripture lies in the existence of the singular phenomena of the skies known as the midget or white dwarf stars. A midget star is one that because of some things which have happened to it astrologically, should be some 5,000 times larger than what it is. To gain the proper reference, we must imagine the earth has having shrunk from its diameter of

8,000 miles to 400 miles.

This enormous density has a great deal of power in it. The sun, which is our nearest star sits at between 25 to 30 million degrees Fahrenheit. Atoms can be exploded at such temperatures. At such high temperatures all matter would be in the form of gas. At the white dwarf star because the size is much smaller than what it should be, the gases are liquid fire. Before it could become a normal star it would have to cool off and expand to natural size. However the midget stars never

cool off and because of the compression it can never burn out. Astronomers and scientists recognize the high heat intensities and can fully document what has been said.

-In hell there will be four distinct torments that a man will have to endure and never have relief from.

-Just to think that everything that you have now, you will trade it for a glass of water in hell.

#### **A. The First Flame -- Pain -- 16:24 -- I am tormented in this flame. . . . .**

-You will be burning but never be consumed. Falling into a bottomless pit. There will be weeping and wailing and the gnashing of teeth around you.

-Unbearable pain but never any sense of relief. Nothing to stop the flames.

#### **B. The Second Flame -- The Memory -- 16:25 -- Son, Remember. . . . .**

-He will remember everything about this life. Locked away in the mind will come forgotten things. He will scrutinize his earthly life. He will weigh and measure every single motive.

-In this life the conscience speaks at intervals. It speaks only when we find a slippery path of temptation that we are trying to navigate. In Hell, there is no intermission from the voice of the

conscience.

-The voice of the conscience will remind you of a God offended, a Savior spurned, and the Heaven lost. The conscience will remember every note that distracted you when conviction was

trying to get your attention. The conscience will prompt us of the people who we allowed to stand in our way of greater commitment.

-What will be remembered:

- All of the times spent in the house of God.
- All of the times the Spirit tugged at the heart with conviction.
- All of the times that you prayed and someone prayed with you.
- All of the times that you shrugged off the call of commitment.
- All of the times that you sat uninvolved and preoccupied during the moments of worship.
- All of the times that you laughed it off.
  
- All of the times that you watched others find spiritual relief and blessing.

- All of the sermons that you ever heard.
- All of the Sunday School lessons that you heard.
- All of the excuses you used about why you could not serve God.
- All of the times that you were wandering about the halls when Church was going on.
- All of the times that you said that there were problems with the Church.

. . . . Nothing will escape your memory.

-The memory is so powerful.

- Who will be the Judge? The memory.
- Who will be the Accuser? The memory.
- Who will be the Witnesses? The memory.
- Who will be the Jury? The memory.

-These words sum up the power of the memory:

*I'll tell thee what is Hell--thy memory*

*Still mountained up with records of the past,*

*Heap over heap, all accents and forms,*

*The best occasions trifled o'er or spurned;*

*All that hath been that ought not have been,*

*That might have been so different, that now*

*Cannot but be irrevocably past.*

*Thy gangrened heart,*

*Stripped of its self-worn mask, and spread at last*

*Bare in it's horrible anatomy,*

*Before thy own excruciated gaze.*

-The words, "Son, remember. . ." is a voice of warning for this life.

### **C. The Third Flame -- The Separation -- 16:26 -- A great gulf . . . .**

***Luke 13:26 28*** -- "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." "But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

-In hell apparently its inhabitants will have a limited view of the rests that are present to those who are in heaven.

-This view will be a living illustration to you of the lost opportunities in this life and the chances that were not taken.

But you will not be there, you will be separated from God, from the moving of His Spirit, and from those you knew in the Church.

**D. The Fourth Flame -- An Unanswered Prayer -- 16:27 -- I pray that you would send. .**

-The rich man had five brothers who were on the road to ruin. If somehow Lazarus would just return from the dead and preach and witness to my brothers. But it was an unanswered plea. The answer was given that there are others who are right now working toward reaching the lost.

-The man in hell suddenly had a change of heart about preaching, particularly earnest preaching.

-As I have preached, you probably have given me more of your attention than any time in the past when I have preached. But I tell you that you have not been nearly as attentive and reaching as some have been. Those you cannot see.

-As I have preached they have been as the rich man. Please preach with passion. Please preach like you believe. Please preach with an anointing.

-No doubt somewhere there are mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers and grandparents who are begging that someone should reach their families right now during this message.

- Please warn them of the pain.
- Please tell them about the separation.
- Please tell them about the memory that never stops speaking.
- Please tell them about the remorse for even the simple sins.

**VI. CONCLUSION**

-I only have one question to ask you before these altars are opened:

***“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”***