

**Bible Text:** Revelation 20:11  
**Preached on:** Sunday, November 8, 1981

**Calvary Memorial Church**  
Address

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Turn this morning if you have your Bibles to the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter or Revelation. We want to begin reading at the 11<sup>th</sup> verse.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 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.<sup>1</sup>

Let's ask the Lord's blessing on his Word.

*Our Father, as we have come this morning to these solemn pages, as we have read this morning of the eternal punishment of those who know not the Lord Jesus Christ we come asking, Father, that your Word might be open to our hearts this day. We are conscious afresh of human weakness. We understand that when it comes to the proclamation of the Word of God that there is no human power. And yet, Father, we thank thee that we can claim thy promise that if we being evil know how to give good gifts unto our children, if you as our loving heavenly Father are so much more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask. We ask you today that the preacher might know the presence and power of the Spirit of God, the people also might now this same power as they hear this Word, that it might pierce their hearts to point them to the need that is in their life today. Father, we are trusting you that by your grace that in all these things the Lord Jesus might be magnified. We pray it in his precious name. Amen.*

The past few weeks I have been preaching you messages almost exclusively on two subjects. Sundays was prophecy and Christian living. I enjoy that type of sermon because it teaches us how, as believers, we may live lives which honor the Lord Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 20:11-15.

Today I am going to do what I don't enjoy. I am going to preach about the lake of fire. How many of you listen to sermons from many sources? You hear them on radio, television as well as from pulpits. You hear the preachers whose messages fall on the ears of millions as fortunes are spent to get out the Word of God to the unsaved. And it would be very enlightening to count in your mind right now how many sermons you have heard in the past three years on the lake of fire or even the number where significant emphasis was placed on the destination and destiny of those who die without Christ.

The Lord Jesus made this statement one time. He said, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."<sup>2</sup> What he meant was: Those who have no salvation, the people of this world who understand this world only often use more wisdom in advocating their beliefs than those who knew the truth of the Word of God.

For instance, those who know nothing of the Bible fear death as the greatest enemy. To them the darkest day of human existence is when, for some reason, life is over, the undertaker comes and family and friends gather as a lifeless body is lowered into the ground. For them that is the darkest day in human history.

So with this knowledge they spend billions of dollars every year to warn people of that danger. Hundreds of thousands of times a day by radio, by television, millions of people hear the message around the world.

"If you drink, don't drive. If you drive, don't drink."

"Fight cancer with a check up and a check."

"Speed kills."

"It is a matter of life and breath."

"America's number one killer is heart disease."

Over and over and over again they advertise their beliefs. Every ad in every newspaper and magazine, every pack of cigarettes sold carries the warning: "The surgeon general has determined that cigarette smoking is hazardous to your health."

There are literally hundreds of government agencies which function solely for the purpose of keeping America safer so that people will not die in falling buildings, from contaminated foods and automobiles and disaster and all these many other things.

We have policemen and firemen and FBI agents and billing inspectors and health inspectors and hundreds of others. Because death to the children of this world is the

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 16:8.

worst possible thing that could happen. And “The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”<sup>3</sup>

But, you see, the message of warning is missing from evangelical Christianity today. There are many preachers and Christians who in charge of America they would make some changes.

On every pack of cigarettes they would have printed, “Why not try chewing gum?”

Instead of warning against the dangers of drinking and driving they would put up more billboards advertising milk.

In the place of “Speed kills,” their slogan would be, “Bicycles are beautiful.”

Just a positive message, you see. Because you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

But there is a serious clash here with my philosophy because I am not trying to catch flies. I am trying to keep men and women and boys and girls out of the lake of fire forever. Hell fire and brimstone preaching is a thing of the past not because there is a better method, not because it is unbiblical, but because it offends the sensibilities of this ungodly sophisticated generation in which we live. It is anti intellectual to preach on hell. It brands you as negative and unloving and crude because, you see, love is heading an anti cancer drive. Love is selling Easter Seals. Love is giving to the heart fund or donating blood to the Red Cross. This is love, if you believe that death is the greatest of human calamities.

But if you believe the Bible, if you believe that whosoever is not found in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire, then the warning must go forth. The message must be heralded and in spite of anything that man can say or do.

There are very few people who know what a loving God is like. They say, “Preacher, don’t tell us about a God of love who will send men and women to an eternal hell.”

And for many weeks now this message has been in my heart. It was born in the midst of satanic attack. Over and over and over again for weeks the devil has been saying to me, “Preacher, why did God allow evil to come into the universe? He knew about those souls that would be lost forever. He knew that awful penalty for sin that was going to be meted out to sinners. God is all powerful and he could have prevented the rebellion of Satan and he didn’t do it. Why don’t you get in the pulpit and tell us people about that God of yours who says, ‘Love your enemies,’<sup>4</sup> and then sends his to eternal torment?”

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27.

I said, “Lord, it is the devil who in the first few verses of the Bible questioned your goodness. I want to preach a sermon on the lake of fire and I am trusting you to give me the message.”

I have that message today and as a prelude to it, I am going to presume to tell you why a God of love and justice would send a plain, ordinary fellow to be tormented forever. And beyond that I am going to tell you how God explained to my satisfaction the reason for allowing evil to come in to the universe.

If you know anything about theology you might suppose that this is going to be a six months sermon, but it is not quite that bad at all because I believe there are three words that hold the key. There is the word Father, the word Son and the word Holy Spirit.

This is God’s revelation of himself to man. Now think about a father. Innate in the nature of a father, in the purest sense of that term is a desire for a family. God never became a father with that desire, he always has been. This was his nature and purpose from eternity past [?].

In Ephesians chapter three and verse 14 we read:

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.<sup>5</sup>

So God foreknew that he was going to have a family and to care for that coming family he created an innumerable company of servants. According to Hebrews chapter one, all the angels are serving spirits sent forth to serve them which would be heirs of salvation. Angels are very much like heavenly maids and butlers and body guards to serve God and those of his household.

But listen to me now. These angels were not to be animals. They were not to be dumb and uncomprehending and [?]. If we are going to have servants in our household, we want to have fellowship and communication with them. We don’t want them to lie under the table. We want to be able to have fellowship with them. We want to be able to know them personally and have them know us. God wanted the best servants for his family and there was only one way for that to be possible. Those servants must be as much like God himself as a created being could be. That is the best, as much like God himself as a created being could be.

And for this to be done it necessitated a free will in these creatures because that is what God is like. He has the power to choose. And you either create a machine, an animal, something locked into its instincts or you must give the power of choice.

Without a freewill they would be heavenly zombies, no power of spiritual choice would make them an animal and not angels at all. But, you see, here is the problem. The very act of creating anything less than himself opened the door to sin.

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<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 3:14-15.

That is what Isaiah 45 said and is talking about.

This is the message of the entire Bible, that any created being in any environment will sin unless he is restrained by God himself. God is the only one in the whole universe who, unrestrained, will not sin. But, you see, for God to restrain an angel or a man eternally against his will is not love, that is wickedness. Truth makes people free, free to choose for good or for ill. And if God is going to be true, he must give freedom. If God is going to be true, he must offer freedom on every hand or he is no God at all. If it doesn't offer freedom, it is a lie and not the truth.

For Lucifer, son of the morning exercised his free will when he rebelled. He was not content to be as much like God as a creation could be. He wanted to be greater than God himself. Lucifer and one third of the angels rebelled against God's goodness because the truth had made him free to do that.

But think about man in the garden. Man in the Garden of Eden is a very famous story, indeed. Also created in the image of God. The tree that made him free, no cruel, wicked imposition upon his will, but absolute freedom of choice. He was there with every need supplied. He had everything good that he could desire. Nothing could be added to or taken away from the provision of God for that man. But Adam was a representative man. He was a federal head of the race. He was there doing what any other human being would have done in the same situation. He rebelled against God and chose his own way.

Now sometimes you will hear people say how unjust it is that Adam's sin should be transmitted to the whole human race. Don't you believe a word of it. That sinful nature that is transmitted from parent to child is one of the greatest acts of grace the world has ever known because every single one of them has that sin potential. Just the fact of being a creation and not a creator. And suppose that God had made it so that every child had to grow up somehow and figure out at 50 years old that he was a sinner and needed salvation. Ninety five percent of the people who ever get saved get saved before they are 25 years of age, when they are young and their and they can see their sins and they know about those lies that they have been telling, those things that they have been doing wrong, when they are conscious of that need that is in their life, the very thing that God is trying to show man from the cradle to the grave.

But we have not only a Father desiring a family from the human race and servants from these angels. We have a Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And, my friends, never forget that this Son was God himself. In him dwelled all the fulness of the godhead bodily.

Now what does that mean? In him dwelt all the fullness of the godhead bodily. It means that in some unexplainable way in him there was a manifestation of all that there is in God. And when he died on that cross God took the fulness of his own wrath upon himself to save sinners. Every punishment that God is going to give to any man or woman he has already suffered himself in order to make provision for salvation. God

loved the human race enough to suffer every agony that they would ever suffer themselves in an attempt to save them.

Now that is absolute and infinite love. But for God to be God his wrath must be absolute and infinite wrath. If his love is going to last forever then his wrath must last forever.

And God wanted a family upon which he could pour out his eternal love forever. But to have any human family at all, sin must be a possibility. There either was going to be a human family or there was going to be absolutely none. There were either going to be fallen angels or there would be absolutely not.

Truth must offer men freedom. But get this now. Not only is there a Father desiring a family to love and bless and a Son suffering everything lost sinners must suffer, but there is also a Holy Spirit, a Holy Spirit, the working of whom I believe people have failed to understand from the message of the Bible. His work is to get people saved.

Now Adam was the federal head of the race and any man in his position would have sinned. But Adam got saved. He had no Bible. He had no missionary. He had no church. He had no missionary. He had no church. He had no preacher, just Adam and God the Holy Spirit to take the things of Christ and show them to him. But that man wanted salvation and he got it. He learned of Christ from God himself and do you know what that means? It means that every child of Adam's race can be saved, every one of them, no matter who he is or where he is or what he is.

I quote it to you so often, but do you really believe it? “[God] is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness.”<sup>6</sup>

God does not act with his promises as some men might assume that he does, because he “is longsuffering to us—ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”<sup>7</sup> That means that God the Holy Spirit moves in the life of every human being to do anything and everything that can be done by God himself to get people saved except one thing, tamper with their free will, because if he did that he would have a race of animals and not men.

“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”<sup>8</sup>

But God cannot force a man to go to heaven. He is truth and truth must preserve freedom. Salvation is free for the asking any time, anywhere to anybody. The very instant that a five year old child lays down his rebellion against God he gets saved. The very instant a 40 year old man lays down his rebellion against God he gets saved. Nothing to do, nothing to be, just stop fighting. It is so simple that the wayfaring man, though a fool, should not err therein.

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<sup>6</sup> 2 Peter 3:9.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Romans 5:20.

Now think about this statement for a moment. If you want to see the glory in the grace of the king, don't examine his dungeon. Examine his palace. In any kingdom there are going to be rebels against society. And those rebels must be shut out from that society or they will contaminate it. God never sends a man to hell unless he has done everything in the power of God to get him the will to be saved.

God never condemns a soul until he has proven to his own satisfaction that that individual would not respond to his grace if he kept after him for a hundred billion years. He would never turn. He would never give in to the grace of God if God is not willing that any should perish.

Now let me ask you something. If you had a family of four children and three of them loved you, healthy children, happy children, wonderful children, but there was one child who was in constant rebellion. You have done everything possible to win his love. You have given him everything. You have taught him everything. You have tried everything in your power and he doesn't want any part of you or your family. And you have all knowledge. You can see way on down there 200,000 million billion years from today. You know he will never change. In fact, you know, that unless that child is put out of your family forever, he is going to destroy it.

Now the question is this. Would you be a just loving parent to let that rebellious child live in your house? If [?] your four children had never existed than to lose one forever. If you would, you have got the love problem. You don't understand the Father's heart. If one of my children leaves me and breaks my heart, I wouldn't dare think that the other... wishing that the other two had never existed. I would never imagine such a thing because that is not the heart of a Father.

Love and justice are totally dependent on fair dealings with everybody that is involved. A loving God must be a just judge or he is no loving God at all. And if there was ever going to be any human family there must be this righteous judgment among the sons of men.

Somewhere in the universe there must be justice some day to right all the injustices of earth or the very idea of a God of truth and love and justice is a hollow mockery. It means nothing.

But, by the same token, unless there is a God upon the throne of heaven who would do everything, everything in the power of God to get men saved, it is all a mockery as well. That is the kind of God we have revealed right here in the Bible, a loving God of righteousness who loved man enough to suffer all that torment himself that they might be saved. And there is nothing more than a child like ascent to that truth to be born of God. There is nothing more than to admit for one moment that self does not have the answer, that sin has blighted the life, that Christ is the only Savior who is going to bring a man to eternal life.

But there is another thing that few people understand about a loving God and that is his message. Suppose that you are walking down a road on a pitch black night and suddenly two feet in front of you the pavement drops away to nothing. Down below there is a raging river that is crashing over the rocks because the bridge is out. And you run back up the highway and you flag down the first car. And you say, "My friend, I want to tell you that I love you and God loves you. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. Why don't you turn around and go back the other way. Your life will be so much better if you do."

Now some people think that God's message should be presented in that way. And they equate that kind of talk with the love of God. But I would remind you that our pattern is the Bible. The loving message of God is found within its pages. There are 7957 verses in the New Testament, 7957. And do you know how many of those verses record the Lord Jesus Christ speaking specifically of the love of God for sinful man? One verse, one verse out of 7957. That is John 3:16.

In the book of Acts the only record of early Church sermons the word love is not in the book one time.

Now this is not to say that God doesn't love us. Because, as I pointed out to you just a moment ago, he loved us with an infinite love, a love so great that he himself was willing to suffer our hell for us. This is not to say that God doesn't love us, but it is to say that the preaching of the love of God alone or even primarily is not the message of the Lord Jesus in the early Church. It is not the testimony of the Bible.

Once in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, never in the book of Acts.

For every one verse in the Bible about heaven there are 10 verses on hell. The Lord Jesus Christ preached 22 times in the New Testament on hell. Hell is mentioned 162 times either directly or indirectly in the New Testament. By indirectly I mean that sometimes it is called unquenchable fire or a furnace of fire or damnation or destruction or everlasting fire when the word hell itself is not used.

But I don't want to teach about hell today. This is no teaching sermon on sheol and gehenna and tartars and hades and all the Hebrew and Greek words that are translated hell. I want to preach to you about the lake of fire. I want to warn you about the place where the broken pavement falls away, down there at the end of the broad road which leads to destruction.

The Bible teaches that lost men now who die in their sins go to the heart of the earth to be tormented in the flames, but that is only temporary. Lost men go there to await the great white throne of which we read this morning in Revelation 12. I am speaking to you of the eternal destination, the lake of fire, the place where every man or woman, boy or girl, who dies unsaved will remain forever. They will die and remain there forever because God has tried over and over and over and over again to get them to assent to the simplicity of the gospel, so simple that a fool can understand it, so simple that a little



child can believe it and in a moment of time be transformed by the power of God. But they refused and they refused and they refused day after day the grace of God.

Now this place called the lake of fire is going to be different in many ways from the temporary place in the heart of the earth called hell. At the present time there is nobody in the lake of fire. The scene before us here in the closing chapters of the book of the Revelation is the end of time as we know it. The rapture, the coming of the Lord Jesus for the saved is over. The seven years of tribulation has come to an end. The millennium, the thousand year reign of the Lord Jesus Christ is ended. And now at the end of the seven years of tribulation two people are going to go into the lake of fire. We read about it here in Revelation chapter 19 and verse 20.

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”<sup>9</sup>

Now we are talking here about the antichrist and the false prophet. They are going to be the first inhabitants of the lake of fire. One thousand years later the devil goes to the lake of fire. We read about it in Revelation chapter 20 and verse 10.

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are [they are already there], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”<sup>10</sup>

Now this was the purpose of the lake of fire being created. God is going to say to those on his left hand, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”<sup>11</sup>

The prison house for the damned was prepared for the fallen angels, for those who had rebelled against God in heaven. It wasn't prepared for human beings because God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. He is not willing that any should perish. And if there was anything that could ever be done to turn a man away from the lake of fire, God has done it.

The devil and his angels are not in hell right now. They never have been. You see, these pictures of Satan sitting upon a throne amidst the flames directing his demons to bring somebody in, that is not biblical. The devil and his demons are not in hell. The devil and his demons are right around us in the spiritual realm. This world is his kingdom, not hell or the lake of fire. He is the God of this world the Bible says.

“The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Revelation 19:20.

<sup>10</sup> Revelation 20:10.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 25:41.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:4.

Satan is going to be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are at the close of the 1000 year reign.

And then comes the event that is recorded for us here in Revelation chapter 20 and verse 11.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”<sup>13</sup>

Upon this great white throne is sitting the Lord Jesus Christ.

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”<sup>14</sup>

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.”<sup>15</sup>

This is all the unsaved dead of all the ages.

“And the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”<sup>16</sup>

You see, God is keeping books on every human life. He is recording every lie that has ever been told, every stolen object, every hateful word, every wicked thought. Each time that a person breaks one of the 3763 commands of God in the Bible that deed is recorded. Each time that a person fails to do what they should have done that sin of omission is recorded.

Verse 13. “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.”<sup>17</sup>

Now this is the bodily resurrection of every man and woman. Death, the grave and hell, this temporary place of suffering in the heart of the earth at the present moment “were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”<sup>18</sup>

This is the final abiding place. This is where every lost soul goes forever.

I want you to imagine with me this morning that we can see the unseeable. We are going to watch in our minds a man who dies unsaved without Christ and without hope. And by

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<sup>13</sup> Revelation 20:11.

<sup>14</sup> John 5:22.

<sup>15</sup> Revelation 20:12.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Revelation 20:13.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

the teaching of the Bible itself we are going to see what he experiences as he is cast into the lake of Fire.

Now this is going to be something that is beyond our comprehension. But it is something that God has explained in some measure so that we might know the need to flee from the wrath to come.

God has explained in some measure this great love that he had, the things that he suffered, the price that he paid, the ends to which he will go to get people saved. And he has also explained in some measure what eternal wrath means. It is just the opposite of eternal love, but it is that which must be in the nature of God if he is going to be God at all.

We are standing with the Lord Jesus Christ at the great white throne in heaven and we see a man rising up from the earth. His body and his soul have been united. And he appears in a body that is slightly changed, changed to live forever, but it is a body just the same.

We would no doubt recognize that man. The filth of the grave still covers him. The smell of death and decay is there. And as he gets closer we see that he is dressed not in the white robes which clothe the saved believers around the throne. He is dressed in filthy rags. He has no shoes upon his feet because the place where he is standing is holy ground. And as we look at the soles of his feet and the crown of his head, we can see that there is no soundness in him. There is only wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.

That which God said of man in his sins in the Bible has become literally true and will be true forever.

A man's name is called and he steps forward. The books are opened and an angel begins to read his sins to the assembled multitude. He interrupts and he cries, "Lord, Lord, I preached in your name. I taught Sunday school. I tried to be a good husband and Father. I did many wonderful works."

The Lord opens the book of life and he looks in. He says, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."<sup>19</sup>

You could have been saved by humbling yourself with the faith of a little child. If you had been a fool you could have been saved. But time and time again you wouldn't admit that need.

"Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."<sup>20</sup>

And immediately, immediately those filthy rags are going to be ripped off of him and he stands naked before the millions of the earth looking on.

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<sup>19</sup> Matthew 7:23.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Now perhaps you say, “Preacher, I don’t see that there.” And that is true.

But I will tell you something. The very things that happened to the Lord Jesus Christ are going to happen to every lost sinner because that is what he was suffering. He was the substitute for lost sinners. He was taking the punishment of the lake of fire for those who died without Christ.

Now I will never be stripped before the multitudes because he was stripped for me. But you may rest assured that those things which happened to the Lord Jesus Christ will yet happen to every soul who goes to the lake of fire and dies in their sin.

But there is our man and he is standing before the universe. He is naked. He is ashamed. He is condemned. He is guilty. He is covered with the sores and the filthiness of sin and death. He has been left absolutely speechless. Every mouth will be stopped and all the world will become guilty before God. And that man will admit at the great white throne judgment that he deserves to be cast into the lake of fire on the basis of the judgment that God is going to offer.

He is going to be clear when he judges. He is going to lay out there precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little, so every soul will know why they died and went to the lake of fire.

And they will know justice when they see it. They will know it when they see it revealed by God himself.

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast [not carried, but cast] into the lake of fire.”<sup>21</sup>

Now where is the lake of fire? Only God knows that. What is the lake of fire? It is the lake that is filled with the molten wrath of God. It is a lake that is filled with fire which never shall be quenched. Our God is a consuming fire.

When Moses met God in the mountain there was a literal burning fire. The people could see the smoke. They could feel the heat. And speaking of God the psalmist said:

Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Revelation 20:15.

<sup>22</sup> Psalm 97:2-5.

You see, it is the holiness and the wrath of our God who is a consuming fire that is burning in a lake somewhere in the universe. And it is everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Men and women go there because they rebel time and time again at God's offer of salvation.

Now science knows about lakes of unquenchable fire in space. They laughed at the thought just a few decades ago until telescopes became more powerful.

I want to quote to you from a scientist at NYU. He says, "The word lake does connote a body of matter having liquid form. Therefore if Scripture is true, this eternal fire must be in liquid form. The very simple proof lies in the existence in the skies of white dwarf stars. They have a temperature of 30 million degrees Fahrenheit which would explode atoms. In a white dwarf the pressure is so great that gasses become compressed to the consistency of a liquid. In so far as astronomers and physicists note, the white dwarfs can never cool off. It cannot be quenched for any quenching material such as water would immediately have its atoms stripped of electrons and be packed in with the rest."

Now, personally, I am convinced from Scripture that these white dwarf stars are not the lake of fire. But they are simply an example of God the man that he has created unquenchable fire in the universe. God is telling us of a lake, not a lake of clear cool water surrounded by trees and grass and birds and flowers, but a lake of enormous size and depth, one that is filled with a liquid consuming fire of the wrath of God.

And we see our man standing, naked and filthy and condemned before the great white throne. The Lord Jesus stands to his feet and with a voice as the sound of many waters he cries out, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."<sup>23</sup>

And two angels step up and they lay hold upon this miserable creature. And with a strength that slew armies in the Old Testament they pick him up bodily and they cast him as if he were a rag doll into the far corner of the universe. We see him hurling through space as he is cast into the lake of fire.

Often times we have seen and heard of children playing around a lake. They are out on a pier and they cast one another into the water. With a splash they go down beneath the waves and they come up laughing at the fun of it all.

But we have heard also of those who in despair climb to the dizzying heights of a bridge and they plunge into the murky water 100 feet below. They hit the lake with such force that their back and their bones are broken. The impact alone killed them.

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<sup>23</sup> Matthew 25:41.

We watch our man as he is cast hurtling into space. He falls down and down and down into the darkness and he hits the surface of the lake of fire with the impact of a pile driver, not to be killed because God has placed him in a body which can never die.

I read in *Reader's Digest* some months ago of a man who ejected from a plane out over the ocean. His parachute failed to open and he hit the water with such force that the rescuers said that his face looked like ground hamburger meat.

And, beloved, this will happen to those who are cast into the lake of fire.

As he sinks beneath the waves we hear him cry out, "I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax. It melteth in the midst of my bowels. I may tell all my bones. They look and stare upon me."

It happened to the Lord Jesus. Read about it in Psalm 22. And it is going to happen to every lost sinner.

He was taking the eternal punishment for sinners upon himself.

We look at our man as he comes up from beneath the waves, not laughing, but weeping and wailing and gnashing his teeth. We look upon his faith and his visage is so marred, more than any man and his form more than the sons of men. He bursts from beneath the waves of the molten lake of fire and he cries out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

I said we are going to see the unseeable because the man is there in total darkness. The molten fire of the lake has no light, no sun, no moon, no stars shine from above. He has been cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

And this is what the Bible calls "the blackness of darkness for ever."<sup>24</sup>

His body is submerged in the lake of fire. He fights to keep his head above the waves. He can smell the smoke and the brimstone. He can hear a woman weeping. He can hear a teenager wailing. He can hear an old man gnashing his teeth in pain. But he can see absolutely nothing, nothing at all.

And our man remembers a sermon that he heard one night.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."<sup>25</sup>

And now he understands why he is in the blackness of darkness forever. No light will ever come to the lake of fire.

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<sup>24</sup> Jude 13.

<sup>25</sup> John 8:12; 9:5.

The weeks pass and he is still floating in the lake. His arms and his legs have been cramped and knotted for days. He says, “My strength is dried up like a potsherd. My tongue cleaveth to my jaws. I thirst. I thirst.”

Those were the words of the Lord Jesus as he suffered in the place of sinners. And he remembers a friend who directed his attention to Revelation chapter 14.

“And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night.”<sup>26</sup>

The pain will never cease. The burning will never stop because this is the eternal wrath of God.

If we could watch this man for a billion years we would see him drifting on in the darkness. The waves and the billows of the lake breaking over his head. He is like a cloud without water, drifting on endlessly. He is like a raging wave of the sea foaming out his own shame. He is like a wandering star to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever because the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest.

And if we could see our man 100 billion years later, eternity has only begun. And every bone is out of joint. His face is marred beyond recognition. His body is covered with wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. His strength is gone. His body is submerged in liquid fire. There is no rest day or night forever. There is only weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

And there is nothing that lies ahead of him but more blackness and more suffering and more loneliness forever and forever.

Brother, is it any wonder that instead of George Whitefield, the way he was preaching in the open air to meetings, he used to stop in the midst of his sermons. He would lift his hands to heaven with the tears running down his face. He would say, “Oh, the wrath of God, the wrath of God.”

He knew something about it. I wonder if you know something about it. I wonder if you believe the message that God has given that tells of his wrath.

You see his perfect eternal love is before us now. Every day we can see our weakness, our stupidity, our helplessness. Every day testifies to the need of salvation that is in our life. And the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered all these things for us.

But remember now all these things multiplied by the sins of the whole world. The heavens, the earth, the Bible, the inner witness of the heart, every one of them point us to the one who has suffered all these things.

God comes to you today to testify of your sin, to testify to you of Christ’s righteousness

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<sup>26</sup> Revelation 14:11.

and to warn you of the wrath of God. Every particle of God's being cries out, "Flee from the lake of fire." God says it so plain that a fool can't miss it. A little child can't miss it.

And, beloved, if you miss it, you will be tormented day and night forever. It is a humbling thing to believe the record of the Word of God, to believe that you are going to die and be lost forever because you are too ignorant to understand the ways of God, because you are too helpless to contend with the power of God.

It is a humbling message, but God says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."<sup>27</sup>

He offers that salvation so freely, so openly. And he says, "Turn before it is too late."

Call upon the God of glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, this one who died for you, this one who paid for all your sins that you might have this gift of eternal life.

Now, my friend, I wonder about you this morning. If I were to come to you today and put my arm on your shoulder most of you would say, "Preacher, you know me. I am a member of your church. I have been coming a long time. Don't you remember about the testimony that I gave you one time?"

Beloved, let me ask you something. What if you died today? What if you died and you found that you were still in your sins? What if you died and you woke up one day in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever?

The offer of God is still open. The salvation of God is freely available to any soul who can see the need who is willing to believe the message, any soul that is willing to come with the faith of a little child and lay down their rebellion and give their heart and life to the Lord Jesus. And for you, today is going to be one more day, a day of turning your back on the attempt of God to save your soul or a day of entering in to the blessed realities of finding the peace and the joy of sins forgiven knowing that you are going to leave this world to step out onto the streets of gold in heaven, to walk with this wonderful Savior who loved you enough to suffer all that lake of fire for you or to die in your stubborn rebellion without hope and without God.

Let's close with a word of prayer.

*Our Father, as we have looked into these things today we know, again, that there is nothing humanly speaking that can be said about these things. But, our Father, you know the need that is in every heart. And, once again, we thank you that today the Spirit of God is pleading with all sinners. He is drawing them. He is pointing them to the need. He is offering to men and women and boys and girls eternal salvation.*

*Father, we know there are some here today no doubt who think this is a joke. There are some who think this is the most ridiculous form of foolishness. Father, we pray that you*

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<sup>27</sup> Matthew 18:3.



*will forgive them. We pray that you will break their heart over their sin. We pray that you will show them that you have said, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the wisdom of the prudent."<sup>28</sup> And, our Father, for those who are willing to receive this message, to hear it, to believe it, we pray that today before it is eternally too late they will bow their head, they will bow their heart before thee and call upon the Lord Jesus to save their soul. We pray these things in our Savior's precious name. Amen.*

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<sup>28</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:19.