

## Hell – Part 2

*Various Sources, Contemporary with the Scriptures*

A five week study on the realities of Hell

**Desert Son Community Church**

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### I. The validity of hell

#### A. The first century Jews that lived during the time of Jesus

##### 1. Hell was a place of *punishment* after Judgment

[T]he chambers shall give up the souls which have been committed to them. And the Most High shall be revealed upon the seat of judgment... recompense shall follow ... unrighteous deeds shall not sleep. Then the pit of torment shall appear ... and the furnace of Gehenna shall be disclosed (4 Ezra 7:32-36, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD).

‘Then the Most High shall say to the nations that have been raised from the dead: “Look and understand who it is you have denied and refused to serve, and whose commandment you have despised. Look on this side, then on that: here are rest and delight, there fire and torments.” That is what he will say to them on the Day of Judgment. But as for those who have rejected the ways of the Most High and despised his law, and who hate all that fear God, their spirits enter no settled abode, but roam thence forward in torment, grief, and sorrow. And this for seven reasons. First, they have despised the law of the Most High. Secondly, they have lost their last chance of making a good repentance and so gaining life (4 Ezra 7:37, 38, 80-82, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD)

- The Jews did not view hell as some sort of corrective or *remedial* punishment
- The Jews did not view hell as a place where someone would eventually come out “*refined*”

[T]he sinners are set apart when they die and are buried in the earth and **judgment has not been executed upon them in their lifetime**, upon this great pain, until the great day of judgment – and to those who curse (there will be) plaque and pain forever, and retribution of their spirits (1 Enoch 22:10-13, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC).

## 2. Hell is described as a place of **fire**, lament and darkness

[T]he coming world will be given to these [i.e., the ones obedient to God], but the habitation of the many others [the wicked] will be in fire (2 Baruch 44:15, 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD).

Woe unto you, sinners, because the works of your hands! On account of the deeds of your wicked ones, in blazing flames worse than fire, it shall burn (1 Enoch 100:9, 1<sup>st</sup> century BC).

“Woe to the nations that rise up against the people! The Lord almighty will take vengeance on them in the Day of Judgment; he will send fire and worms into their flesh; they shall weep in pain forever” (Judith 16:17, 1<sup>st</sup> century BC; cf. Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:48).

“And there is no light there, and a black fire blazes up perpetually, with a river of fire that comes out over the whole place.” (2 Enoch 10:2, 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD)

” Know ye, that their souls will be made to descend into Sheol and they shall be wretched in their great tribulation. And into darkness and chains and a burning flame where there is grievous judgment shall your spirits enter; and the great judgment shall be for all the generations of the world. Woe to you, for ye shall have no peace. (1 Enoch 103:5-8, 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC)

## 3. The duration of hell was **debated** among 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews

### a) Hell eventually led to **annihilation**

And their dwelling place will be in darkness and the place of destruction; and they will not die but melt away until I remember the world and renew the earth. And then they will die and not live, and their life will be taken away from the number of all men (Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum 16:3, a passage from the second temple corpus, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD).

On judgment day, God will “drag Beliar [The Devil], and his hosts also, into Gehenna,” and He will then resurrect the dead and “cause fire” to “consume all the impious, and they will become as if they had not been created” (Ascen. Is. 4:14-18).

**b) Hell was a place of *never-ending* punishment**

[The wicked were] pleading that he may give them a little breathing spell from the angels of his punishment... begging for a little rest but find it not... Light has vanished from before us and darkness has become your habitation forever and ever; because we have formerly neither had faith nor glorified the name of the Lord of the Spirits (1<sup>st</sup> Enoch 63:1-7, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD).

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Because of this, justice has laid up for you intense and eternal fire and tortures, and these throughout all time will never let you go (4 Maccabees 12:12, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD).

- The 1st century Jewish writers believed that Hell was a *real* place of punishment
- “Understanding first century Judaism and what the Jews believed about hell *prepares* us for understanding Jesus’ teaching on the subject in His own context.”

**II. Application**

- A. Practice sharing your faith this week using the application and questions I gave to you last week
1. To you who is Jesus?
  2. If what you believed was not true would you want to know it?
- B. **Romans 3:23** – “What does that mean to you?”
- C. **Romans 6:23** – “What does that mean to you?”
- D. **John 3:3** – “What does that mean to you?” – You may need to explain “born again”
- E. **John 14:6**– “What does that mean to you?”
- F. **Romans 10:9-11**– “What does that mean to you?”
- G. **1 John 5:11-12**– “What does that mean to you?”
- H. **Revelation 3:20** – “Is there something that you need to do?” First person that speaks “loses” ...or “wins.”