

# H3

**Session 23**  
**Personal Eschatology**  
**Hell**

Postmortem Alternatives for the Wicked:

Naturalism  
Annihilation  
Universalism  
Purgatory  
Reincarnation  
Self-Determination  
2<sup>nd</sup> Chance  
Judgment (Hebrews 9:27)

**According to the Bible, Hell is characterized by:**

- Knowledge of Heaven  
Luke 13:28  
Luke 16:23
- Fire  
Matthew 5:22  
Matthew 13:30, 39-42, 49-50  
Matthew 18:8-9  
Matthew 25:41  
Mark 9:43  
Luke 3:9  
Luke 16:24  
Jeremiah 4:4
- Pain Without Relief  
Luke 16:23-28  
Luke 12:46  
Matthew 8:12  
Matthew 13:42, 49-50  
Matthew 22:13  
Matthew 24:51  
Matthew 25:30  
Luke 13:28
- Wrath  
Jeremiah 4:4  
Romans 2:5-6
- Destruction  
Matthew 7:13  
Matthew 10:28  
Mark 12:40
- Darkness  
Matthew 8:12  
Matthew 22:13



- Matthew 25:30
- Terror
  - Matthew 26:24
  - Mark 9:42
  - Luke 17:1-2
- Separation from God
  - Matthew 7:23
  - Matthew 25:10-12, 30
  - Matthew 25:46
  - Luke 13:27
- Rule of God
  - Matthew 10:28
  - Matthew 25:41, 46
  - Revelation 14:10

**According to the Bible, Hell is:**

- Real
  - Matthew 23:33
  - John 5:29
- Literal
  - Matthew 8:12
  - Matthew 13:42, 49-50
  - Matthew 22:13
  - Matthew 24:51
  - Matthew 25:30
  - Luke 13:28
  - Luke 16:28
- Forever
  - Matthew 18:8
  - Matthew 25:41, 46
  - Mark 9:43, 46, 48
  - Daniel 12:2
- Irreversible
  - Hebrews 9:27
- Imminent
  - Matthew 25:13
  - Hebrews 9:27
  - Luke 3:9
  - Luke 12:20, 46
  - John 3:18, 36
  - Romans 2:5
- Final
  - Revelation 20:14-15

Thomas Watson:

“Eternity is a sea without bottom and banks. After millions of years, there is not one minute in eternity wasted; and the damned must be ever burning, but never consuming, always dying, but never dead. The fire of hell is such, as multitudes of tears will not quench it, length of time will not finish it; the vial of God’s wrath will always be dropping upon a sinner. As long as God is eternal, he lives to be avenged upon the wicked. Oh eternity! Eternity! Who can fathom it? Mariners have their plummets to measure the depths fo the sea; but what line or plummet shall we use to fathom the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the infernal lake (Isa 30:33), and where shall we have engines or buckets to quench that fire? O



eternity! If all the body of the earth and sea were turned to sand, and all the air up to the starry heaven were nothing but sand, and a little bird should come every thousand years, and fetch away in her bill but the tenth part of a grain of all that heap of sand, what numberless years would be spent before that vast heap of sand would be fetched away! Yet, if at the end of all that time, the sinner might come out of hell, there would be some hope; but that word 'Ever' breaks the heart. 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.' What a terror is this to the wicked, enough to put them into a cold sweat, to think, as long as God is eternal, he lives for ever to be avenged upon them!" Thomas Watson, BOD p63.

Eternity means that hell is:

a wrath that you cannot resolve yourself to endure.

a loneliness you cannot cope with.

a blackness you cannot get used to.

a suffering you cannot take a break from,

cannot be distracted from,

cannot daydream during,

cannot tune out,

cannot medicate, inebriate, or ameliorate

a discomfort you cannot ignore as you go about your business. Enduring God's wrath will be your business.

There will be No person, no thing, no thought to console you...

Your sentence will be To endure the unendurable, to bear the unbearable, to tolerate the intolerable, to be

perpetually destroyed but never annihilated under the infinite weight of the glory of the justice and holiness of God.

This is an unspeakable hopelessness, the darkest despair.

Dante's *Inferno* "All you who enter here, abandon hope."

Jonathan Edwards:

"consider how great and awful a thing eternity is. Although you cannot comprehend it the more by considering, yet you may be made more sensible that it is not a thing to be disregarded. Do but consider what it is to suffer extreme torment for ever and ever; to suffer it day and night, from one year to another, from one age to another, and from one thousand ages to another, and so adding age to age, and thousands to thousands, in pain, in wailing, in lamenting, groaning and shrieking, and gnashing your teeth; with your souls full of dreadful grief and amazement, with your bodies and every member full of racking torture, without any possibility of getting ease; without any possibility of moving God to pity your cries; without any possibility of hiding yourselves from him; without any possibility of diverting your thoughts from your pain; without any possibility of obtaining any manner of mitigation, or help, or change for the better. Do but consider how dreadful despair will be in such torment. How dismal will it be, when you are under these racking torments, to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them; to have no hope; ...when you would rejoice, if you might but have any relief, after you shall have endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it. After you shall have worn out the age of the sun, moon, and stars, in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without rest day and night, or one minute's ease, yet you shall have no hope of ever being delivered; after you shall have worn out a thousand more such ages, you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer to the end of your torments; but that there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries, incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend up for ever and ever. Your souls, which shall have been agitated with the wrath of God all this while, will still exist to bear more wrath; your bodies, which shall have been burning all this while in these glowing flames, shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through eternity, which will not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past." (Edwards, vol2 p88)

Martin Luther

"If a doctor, able to help, were at the side of a sick person and promised to help him from his trouble and advised him how to combat his ailment or the poison he had taken, and if the sick person knew that the doctor could help him but nonetheless said: Oh, get out, I won't accept your advice; you are no doctor, but a highwayman; I am not sick, nor have I taken poison; it will not hurt me; and if the sick person wanted to kill the doctor, would you not say that this fellow, who persecuted and wanted to kill his doctor, was not only sick but demented, mad, and irrational as well?... But this spiritual madness – that we do



not want to accept help when God's Son wants to help us – is ten time worse. Should our Lord God not be angry and let hell-fire, sulfur, and pitch rain upon such ingrates? For besides being sinners, we are also so wretched as to reject help and chase away and kill those who urge us to accept it." – Martin Luther.

### **Objections and Questions:**

How can heaven be bliss if there are people I know and love in hell?

Why do finite sins committed in time get punished forever?

What happens to babies?

What about people who never hear the gospel?

What do inadequate views of hell say about our view of sin/holiness/the cross?

What happens when you die?

Is there an intermediate state?

What about disembodied spirits and the resurrection?

How do we explain "end of life" phenomena?

How is "Sheol" to be understood in the Old Testament?

### **Resources:**

Thomas Boston *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*

Robert A. Peterson *Hell on Trial: The Case For Endless Punishment*

W.G.T. Shedd *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment*

Robert Duncan Culver *Systematic Theology*, pp1074-1095.

Thomas Watson *A Body of Divinity*, pp 61-62.

Jonathan Edwards, various sermons (available in the 2-Volume Banner of Truth edition of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*:

"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

"The Eternity of Hell Torments"

"Future Punishment of the Wicked"

"Wrath upon the Wicked to the Uttermost"

"The Misery of Unbelievers"

"The End of the Wicked Contemplated by the Righteous"

"Of Endless Punishment"



“The Propriety of a General Judgment, and a Future State”

“The Portion of the Wicked”

Audio and Video sermons from the 2008 Resolved Conference: [www.resolved.org](http://www.resolved.org)

