

# A Vision of Hell

John 3:18



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**FOCAL Read Responsively** {John 3:18} He that believeth on him is not condemned: **but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

As I sat in the Veterinarian's Office waiting for the doctor to treat my little dog Scooter I overheard an interesting conversation. A man was talking with a doctor about the problems of keeping a goat as a pet. The Vet said something next that I'd never heard. She said "The main objective of any goat is to die. They eat any number of things, regardless as to whether or not it's good for them."

The main objective of any goat is to die. I believe that Jesus knew this, for He frequently divided humanity into two groups. He spoke of those who believed on Him as "sheep", but of the unbeliever as "goats". Jesus said to the "goats":

**{Matthew 25:41} ... Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:**

Goats – those who reject Him as Savior – have no place to go in eternity but to a place of **everlasting fire**. This place was not meant for you or I. In fact, Jesus said that it was **prepared for the devil and his angels**. Though the place was prepared for the devil and his angels that will in no way hinder the judgment of God. As our focal text tells us:

**FOCAL** {John 3:18} ... **he that believeth not is**

**condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

I want to talk to you tonight about the subject of Hell, and, I pray, give you a Biblical vision of Hell. Many people today do not believe in Hell, but I assure you – regardless as to what your favorite television evangelist tells you - our Lord Jesus Christ believed in it. *Fifteen times* in the King James version of the Holy Scripture Jesus mentions that place called *hell*. Hell is a place greatly to be feared. At the beginning and at the end of His ministry Jesus preached:

**Matthew 5:29-30 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. {30} And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.**

**Matthew 18:8-9 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. {9} And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.**

Think of that! Jesus preached “**it is better to cut off or pluck out a part of your body and cast it far away**

**from you rather than you enter hell”.**

There is a hell, and it is a place that should be feared.

## **1. Why Do People Go To Hell?**

This is one of the more common statements I hear about hell. People quote the text “**God is love**” (1 John 4:8) and then wrongly apply the statement to *everything* about God. You are not one sided, and neither is God. “**God is love**”, but it is also equally true that “**God is holy and without sin**”. When God allowed the Apostle John to look into Heaven John reported that he saw four angels about the Throne of God *continually saying*:

**Revelation 4:8 ... Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.**

God is holy, God is pure and without sin, and God **was, is, and is to come**. He is the *Great I AM* Who is always present. An offense against God is never forgotten due to the passing of time. Let me say that again:

**An offense against God is *never* forgotten due to the passing of time.**

Someone may offend you and, as time passes, the sting of the offense lessens. This is not true with God. He is *thrice holy* and *eternal*. An offense against God stands forever. When the Prophet Isaiah saw these same angels crying out “**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts**” he cried out:

Isaiah 6:5 ... **Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.**

Hell is not a place you go to be destroyed or burnt up. The destruction of hell is continuous, forever. Those who have **rejected Jesus Christ as Savior** stand condemned before God. As a matter of fact, our focal verse tells us:

**FOCAL** {John 3:18} ... **he that believeth not is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God

The sinner without Christ *stands condemned right now*. The word translated **condemned**<sup>1</sup> literally means **“to judged in the past so that the judgment stands”**. God came into the world in the Person of Christ and the unbeliever has *rejected Christ* in favor of the unsaved life. Our context tells us:

**John 3:19** **And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

Jesus says to the unbeliever **“I have provided the Way unto God, but you reject that Way. You are – right this moment – condemned. You stand in a condemned**

1 Perfect Passive Indicative of G2919, κρίνω, krinōm *kree'-no*, Properly to *distinguish*, that is, *decide* (mentally or judicially); by implication to *try, condemn, punish*: - *avenge, conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, go to (sue at the) law, ordain, call in question, sentence to, think.*

state from the moment you first reached *the age of accountability*- and you continue to stand in that state of judgment even now”.

People believe that they go to hell because they were “bad” people, “immoral” people, or because they were people “who didn't do enough good works”. What does the Bible say? It says

**People go to hell because they reject the freely offered Gospel of Christ. They go to hell because they try to apply their own *temporal and feeble solutions* instead of taking the Eternal Solution of the shed Blood of Christ.**

Listen to this, dear friends. God, in speaking of the Second Coming of Christ, promised that

**2 Thessalonians 1.6-9** ... **when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.....”**

When Christ returns what will determine **punishment with everlasting destruction** is one thing - **“they know not God, and have not obeyed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”**. The unbeliever refuses to accept God's Holy Solution. Again:

**Mark 16:16** He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but **he that believeth not shall be damned.**

What causes *eternal damnation*? Failing to believe on Jesus. What causes *eternal punishment*?

**John 3:36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and **he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**

“The wrath of God abides on him”. The wrath of God, like a terrible force, hangs over the head of every person who has not accepted Jesus Christ as Savior. This wrath is compounded because God has left us a clear witness in Christ. To refuse to accept Him as the Only Way unto God is to call God a liar:

**1 John 5:10-11** (The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. **The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given about His Son.**) {11} **And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.**<sup>HCSV</sup>

To reject Him Who died for you is to **call God a liar**. You who refuse Him are **judged already**.

**If it were not for the Grace of God that allows you to live another day you would be in hell already. Oh, that all would understand this great truth and**

**come unto Jesus!**

## **2. How Can The God Who Is Love Punish Someone *Forever*?**

Some have rejected the Biblical Vision of Hell because they think that a God of Love could not possibly punish someone forever. May I point out that each and every one of us make that decision ourselves.

**FOCAL** {John 3:18} ... **he that believeth not is condemned already, BECAUSE he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

**Illustrate** Have you ever been stuck behind a tractor on a country road? I have, and it's infuriating! The road is twisting and turning and, though I can go 55 miles per hour, I'm stuck behind this vehicle traveling at the speed of snail, at best about 35 miles an hour. Why doesn't he do any faster! The fact of the matter is, *he can't go any faster*. The tractor was designed to plow and do heavy work. It wasn't designed to travel down a highway. My car, on the other hand, was designed to travel down a highway, not to plow a field. Design matters.

The Bible tells us that when God made us He made mankind in His Triune image. We read:

**Genesis 1:26** And **God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:** and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over

every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

You are made **in the image of God**. You are made to have eternal life. Your soul is *distinctly different from that which animates the animals*. Animals are neither moral nor immoral. When a lion chases down and kills a baby giraffe, tearing and rending it, *this is not murder*. Animals cannot murder. When dogs procreate within their immediate families this is not incest. Animals cannot violate one of God's Moral Codes. Animals are not made in the **image of God**. You are. What that means is that your soul has *persistence*. God did not make the soul to be destroyed, He made the soul to have eternal life with Him. When John looked into Heaven what did he see?

**Revelation 6:9 ... I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:**

These believers were killed for standing up for Jesus, and yet – though their bodies were destroyed – their souls remained and were present at the Throne of God. John also saw some believers who were saved *during the Great Tribulation* when the Anti-Christ reigns on the earth. We read:

**Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads,**

**or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.**

These believers are given glorified bodies so they can be with Jesus during His earthly Millennial Reign. What about those who reject Jesus Christ as Savior? We are told:

**Revelation 14.9-11 “ And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”**

Hell is not a place where you go to cease. It is an eternal prison, a place of flames and smoke and torment and grief. It is a place where the wrath of God is poured out unabated. It is a place where

**Mark 9:44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.**

Hell is the most terrible place you can imagine. What makes it most terrible is that it is a place of torment *that the unbeliever brings on himself*.

The most famous sermon ever preached on Hell was the sermon Jesus Christ our Lord preached in Luke 16. Jesus told the story of an *unnamed rich man* and a fellow named *Lazarus*. What does Jesus tell us about the rich man?

**Luke 16:22-24** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: **the rich man also died, and was buried; {23} And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments,** and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. {24} And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for **I am tormented in this flame.**

I cannot teach you all that the Bible has to say about hell, but I do want you to see what Jesus preached. This **rich man died, and in hell lifted up his eyes, being in torments.** There was no passage of time before he was judged.

**The rich man was condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only Begotten Son of God.**

Jesus said **“and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments”**. The rich man said **“I am tormented in this flame”**. Flame holds no terror for the believer, but flame holds torment and terror for the unbeliever. The believer before Christ has his works kissed by flame at the Great Judgment Seat of Christ. There we read:

**1 Corinthians 3:15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but **he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.**

**Fire for the Christian is used by God to purge our works, to bless us, to reveal rewards in Heaven. Fire for the unbeliever is a thing of torment. What is the difference? One believed, and the other refused to believe.**

How sad that so many people look upon the Solution for hell and reject Him. He purchased your salvation at a great cost. Yet many play games and mock Christ, while never understanding **they are condemned already.** How sad, for Christ took your condemnation on Himself.

Jesus Christ allowed Himself to be forsaken of the Father so that we would never be forsaken ourselves (Matthew 27:45-54). As Christ hung on that Cross dying He cried out in agony as He purchased the believer's salvation **“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”** How terrible that He would make such a payment, and people would yet reject Him!

Christ took your place on the Cross so that you could enter His place in Heaven. Yet if you will not come, if you will not repent, then you stand already marked for judgment. Your destination is set to a terrible place. Will you not come while there is time?