

Hellfire Vision (Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God)

6-9-14

In 1741, one of the most influential sermons in American history was preached by Jonathan Edwards. It was in the midst of a period called the Great Awakening, when many colonists, finding themselves separated from their "mother" churches in Europe, were turning to the Bible for guidance in their lives. In the sermon, Edwards explained that:

- The Wicked deserve to be cast into hell. Divine justice does not prevent God from destroying the Wicked at any moment.
- The Wicked, at this moment, suffer under God's condemnation to Hell.
- Simply because there are not visible means of death before them at any given moment, the Wicked should not feel secure.
- Simply because it is natural to care for oneself or to think that others may care for them, men should not think themselves safe from God's wrath.
- All that wicked men may do to save themselves from Hell's pains shall afford them nothing if they continue to reject Christ.
- God has never promised to save us from Hell, except for those contained in Christ through the covenant of Grace.

His conclusion was: "*Therefore let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come.*"

Preaching about hell is something the Bible endorses often. Jesus preached the most about hell, warning us that it is good to be scared of hell, and use that fear to motivate our conduct:

Matthew 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"

Let's make some clear points about Hell:

First, Hell is REAL. It is not a metaphor or a description of suffering, as many believe. It is a place that is prepared by God to satisfy His wrath and justice on men who deny Him.

Second, Hell is ETERNAL. We are told repeatedly that it is a fire unquenched (Mark 9:44-46), and that it is a fire that lasts forever (Revelation 20:10).

Finally, Hell is DESTINY. Meaning, it is the place that many will go, and they cannot simply wish themselves away from it.

Now, let's use a parable from Jesus that, although it is not about Hell, it fits our purpose to describe the mind of a man in Hell. In Luke 16:19-31 Jesus described two men, Lazarus and an unnamed rich man (perhaps unnamed because God did not know him, Matthew 7:23) who die and come to the place of the dead, Hades. This is NOT Hell; it is the place of the dead, and some are there in torment. Hell is not yet occupied; it is a place reserved for judgment (2 Peter 2:4, Revelation 20:13-14), and no one is there until the Day of Judgment (Revelation 20). However, this parable gives us an idea of what a man in Hell might be thinking....

First, he is thinking about how wasted his worldly pursuits were. He now know what matters in life. It was NOT money & leisure, things which he had and now has lost, and their pursuit caused him to be where he was. It was NOT health & happiness; we think being happy is everything, but the lesson teaches that Lazarus had neither, and was now in the paradise of Hades. The rich man, if he could would tell us that chasing money, happiness or health are pure vanity, and we ought to invest every effort of every moment in pursuing a place on the right side of the chasm.

Second, when he realized his destiny was set, he then had a mind towards evangelism. He desired that his brothers should not enter this place too. Hellfire Focus is one on evangelism. In order to prevent them entering hell, it does NOT spare feelings & keep quiet, as too often we are prone to do. It is unwilling to avoid unpleasantness in conversation that a soul might not be lost. The only thing that matters is doing what can be done to save souls.

Conclusion: Hell is Real, and we ought to fear Hell. We ought to do everything to avoid it. As well, we want others to avoid it too