

IS HELL EVERLASTING FIRE?

Message 3

Words: 6080

INTRO: Our subject is how long does hell last? This is a rebuttal to David Raegan's article: Hell: Eternal Punishment Or Eternal Torment? He gave two views of hell; the traditionalist and the conditionalist viewpoint. The traditionalist viewpoint is the view of hell we hold to. The conditionalist viewpoint says you burn as long as you deserve and then you are annihilated.

Raegan's difficulties with the traditionalist viewpoint were first: "How could a God of grace, mercy and love torment the vast majority of humanity eternally?" Second, he felt and I quote: "the concept of eternal torment seems to run contrary to biblical examples. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire – suddenly and quickly. He destroyed Noah's evil world with water – suddenly and quickly. He ordered the Canaanites to be killed swiftly. In the Law of Moses there was no provision for incarceration or torture. Punishments for violation of the Law consisted either of restitution or death. Even sacrificial animals were spared suffering through precise prescriptions for their killing that guaranteed a death that would be as quick and painless as possible.

His third problem was the matter of the second death and it is this subject that we are working on. I sought to define the three kinds of life I find in Scripture and began to deal with death. There is carnal or physical or bios life. Then there is what I called soulical life. And last, there is eternal life or everlasting life.

We began in the last message to look at death. We said that the basic idea is separation, not the end of existence. We were beginning to look at the first kind of death which is physical death and that is where we pick up now. In the last message I said we would first consider what physical death is not.

1) Physical death – The first death

-What it is not

So, the very first thing I want to clarify that physical death is not the cessation of conscious or sensuous existence. Remember that what I mean by sensuousness is that it is being able to sense things, such as sight, sound, smell, hearing and touch. I am talking about the five senses. A person who experiences the senses is sensuous. So, death is not the cessation of the senses.

Let me show you that. Turn to Luke 16 to show this. It is the account Jesus told of the rich man and Lazarus. This passage is a huge revelation when it comes to personal eschatology. We'll read verses 19-31:

- 19 *"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.*
- 20 *"But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,*
- 21 *"desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*
- 22 *"So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.*
- 23 *"And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*
- 24 *"Then 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.'*
- 25 *"But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise*

Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

26 *'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'*

27 *"Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,*

28 *'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'*

29 *"Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'*

30 *"And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'*

31 *"But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"*

Note first that both these men were what we call dead. But we see here that death is not the end of man's existence nor is it the end of consciousness and sensuousness. It is only an exchange from one existence to another. One was physical and the next is non-physical. Death is often viewed as the cessation of existence. For example, the Funk & Wagnall's dictionary defines death like this: "The permanent cessation of all vital functions in an animal or plant." Webster's 1828 dictionary says, "That state of being, animal or vegetable, but more particularly of an animal, in which there is a total and permanent cessation of all the vital functions, when the organs have not only ceased to act but have lost the susceptibility of renewed action."

However, Wikipedia is much more accurate when it says, "**Death** is the termination of all biological functions that sustain a living organism." That is much more accurate but speaks only of the death of the body.

We note second that both these men died. They are physically dead. One went to hell, the other to paradise, or heaven. But we note further that both had their mental faculties and senses intact after death. For those unfamiliar with what I am about to say it may come as a shock. It is this: The senses are not part of the body, they are part of the soul. Our text here could not be more clear on that. Clearly we see that both these men had all their senses after they died.

Turn to Luke 12. I don't want to take a lot of time on this but give enough evidence so you will not question where the senses are situated. We begin in verse 16:

16 *Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.*

17 *"And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?'*

18 *"So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.*

19 *'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry."*

20 *"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'*

Now let me reread verse 19 and insert the elliptical words: "And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; soul,

take your ease; soul, eat; soul drink; and soul, be merry.'"

So when the body dies a person continues to exist in a conscious and sensuous state, only now it is without the body, and it is in a different place. If you want to check this out further, let me give you a few references: Deuteronomy 12:15 and 20-21; 14:26; Matthew 6:25; Luke 12:16-21.

-What it is

So now that we have seen what death is not the end of continuous, sensuous and conscious existence we ask, what is physical death then? Remember first that death is basically a separation of parts. For mankind death is the end of one state of existence, and the entrance into another state of existence. But the new state of existence is now without the body. So turn to James 2. In physical death, the body and spirit of man have been separated. So look at James 2:26 now. It says:

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Hebrews 9:27 says it is appointed to men to die once. This is physical death. So for all mankind at physical death the body ceases to have continuous, successive, active, sensuous, conscious, useful and productive existence. The body now has to be carried to the grave by others. Its capacities no longer exist. When we think of death, that is what we think of, but that is only one part of man's three main parts.

So we ask, what is death with regard to the soul and spirit, from which the body has been separated? Well, with regard to the soul and spirit for the saved there is no death. When the

body dies, they simply continue to live in a different place and manner. We have seen that in the account of the rich man and Lazarus. Listen to what Jesus said in John 11:26:

11:26 "He that lives and believes in Me shall never die".

The word 'lives' is our word *zoe*. I believe it is soul life.

And again, John 5:24:

5:24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."

And once more, John 6:50:

6:50 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die."

Jesus is speaking of the saved in those passages, and He is not speaking of physical death, that is clear because it is appointed to all once to die physically. Only those alive at the rapture are spared physical death. But the body they now have too must be changed.

But what of the soul and spirit of the lost? Here is how I would describe the existence of the soul and spirit for the lost: it is continuous, successive, active sensuous and conscious but it is not useful nor productive with regard to that for which they were created, which is the glory of God. You see, death is not the end of conscious and sensuous existence. I believe that to exist consciously and sensuously in hell is not life. It is death. Now let me make a statement. You must think it through though you need not agree. I think that because the lost have conscious, active, and continuous existence does not mean

they are alive in hell. This is death. It is eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46). On the other hand, conscious, active, continuous existence in heaven is life, real life. It is *aionios zoe* (Matt. 25:46).

But, for the saved, after physical death they will now experience life as the continuous, successive, active, AND useful and productive existence in another state. We see that in Luke 16 in Lazarus. Jesus said in another place, "He who lives and believes in me shall never die." This is what He is talking about.

So before we leave this topic, let me point out a few distinctions between mankind and the rest of creation. The death of the bodies of mankind will all be resurrected some day in the future. When the body ceases to function because of death, it is only temporary. It is only dead until the resurrection. But that is not true of any of the rest of created things that have life, as far as we know from the Word of God. Physical death for mankind is temporary. All will some day be resurrected.

There is yet another distinction between mankind and all other living things. In all other living things, death causes those organisms to cease to exist. But death to human beings only causes the body to decompose. The soul and spirit are just as active as ever, if not more so, as we have already seen in Luke 16.

2) Spiritual Death

That then is physical death. Now we want to look at spiritual death. We begin once more in Genesis 2. We'll read verses 16-17:

16 *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;*

17 *"but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

Now we know that Adam and Eve did not die physically the day they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Some try to explain this death by saying that they 'began' to die that day. But God did not say they would begin to die if they ate. He said they would die, and die they did. The death spoken of here is what we speak of as 'spiritual' death.

We said that death is basically separation. In spiritual death, the separation is between man and God. It is sin that causes spiritual death and it is sin that separates man from God. As I see it, spiritual death is the separation that happens between God and man as long as man is physically alive. In Matthew 8:22 and Luke 9:60 Jesus said, "Let the dead bury the dead." He was talking about those who are spiritually dead. Ephesians 2:1 says, "And you He has given life, who were dead in trespasses and sins." This death is the separation of man from God. This death is the state of all unsaved people.

The encouraging thing about this death is that though all experience it, as long as a person is physically alive, this death can be made to give way to spiritual life. There is a remedy for this death. Sin causes this death. Dealing with sin solves this

death. If a spiritually dead person repents of his or her sins and recognizes what Christ has done to overcome that death and one repents of sin and receives Him as Saviour, this death has been overcome by everlasting life. So Jesus said, "He who lives and believes in Me shall never die." That is what He was talking about. But, on the other hand, if man dies in the state of spiritual death, he goes to hell immediately upon death.

Sin is what causes spiritual death. Listen to Isaiah 59:2, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear."

Now, I have said this of life: it is a state of being or the existence of an entity which is continuous, successive, active, useful and productive. Death is also a state of being that is continuous, successive, that is it moves forward in time, and it is active, but something drastic has happened when it comes to spiritual death. It has rendered man un-useful to God and rendered him unproductive for God.

Man was created for God's glory, but lost man is not useful to God with regard to His glory. That is the life of unsaved mankind. This is spiritual death. This death is the state in which all lost mankind exists even those who are physically alive.

2) Soulical death - the second death

So, we have looked at carnal or physical death which is the separation of the spirit from the body. We have looked at spiritual death, which is the separation between God and man while man is physically alive. And now we

want to look at soulical death. The English language never developed an adjective for the soul, so I made one and call it soulical.

This brings us now to consider David Raegan's third problem with the traditional view of hell. Here is what he said: As a student of God's Prophetic Word, I found a third problem with the traditional view. It seems to contradict a descriptive phrase that is used in prophecy to describe Hell. That term is "the second death." It is a term peculiar to the book of Revelation (Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). How can Hell be a "second death" if it consists of eternal, conscious torment?

When you equate death with the loss of the senses and consciousness, this creates the problem Raegan ran into as I see it. But we have seen already that those who die do not cease to be conscious or sensuous. The reason most people believe the soul cannot die is because we believe the soul cannot cease to exist. But death is not the end of existence. That is the problem here.

So here is the question: Can the soul die, and if so, what does that mean? This is a huge theological debate. Let me just say I agree with Raegan against most others that the soul can die. Only I do not believe that this death is the end of conscious, sensuous existence. I believe the death of the soul is when man is separated as an entire being from God; body, soul and spirit.

Physical death, the death of the body is caused by separating the spirit from the body. Spiritual death is when man is to be separated from God by sin. But what is the death of the soul?

In all my studies I never find that soul and spirit can be separated. The real person resides, not in the body, but in the soul and at death the person goes where the soul goes, or the soul goes where the person goes. I cannot find anywhere in the Bible where the real person can ever come to an end.

So consider now Ezekiel 18:20 which says that the soul that sins it shall die. Now one might argue that the soul is put for the person here. But I believe in the context it is clear that it means more than that.

So we go to Matthew 10:28 which says: "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Jesus said we are to fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

When are both soul and body destroyed in hell? For this we must go to Revelation 20:11-15. The time of which this speaks is after the millennium. The tribulation is past. The millennium is past. The short season when Satan is loosed for a while is past and here we have come to what is called the great white throne judgment. We begin in verse 11.

11 *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.*

12 *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.*

This is the last resurrection. All the righteous have been raised in the first resurrection. No unsaved person has ever been resurrected to this point and now all the lost are resurrected. There will be no more lost people after this. Verse 13:

13 *The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.*

14 *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

15 *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

So verse 14 says this is the second death. The body has been resurrected, and now, together with the soul the person is cast into hell. Here body and soul are destroyed. They do not cease to exist. They cease to exist in a state in which they can ever be of use to God.

When the unsaved die, their souls are forever separated from God and life. I believe the book of Revelation speaks of this death as the second death. In my studies I conclude that the self, the real person resides in the soul. The senses, consciousness and the mind reside there too. Where the soul goes the person goes, or where the person goes the soul goes. And when the body is resurrected and cast into hell with soul and spirit, I believe this is the second death. These people do not live in hell, they are dead. Dead to everything related to God and the glory of God. This is eternal death. Aionios death as compared to aionios zoe; eternal life. So with relation to the whole being; body, soul

and spirit; the body is resurrected and reunited with soul and spirit and the whole being experiences continuous, successive, active, sensuous, conscious, useless and unproductive existence with regard to the glory of God. This is hell.

But consider this now with regard to the saved. Jesus said, "He that lives and believes in Me shall never die." The word for life is zoe, which I believe refers to the life of the soul. So we go to Revelation 2 the Lord gives this promise to the church of Smyrna in verse 11:

2:11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."

Then go to 20:6:

20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

You see, the second death is powerless over the saved. But with regard to the lost we go to Revelation 20:14-15. It say:

20:14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Here is the second death. It relates only to the lost. Consider now Revelation 21:8:

21:8 *"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

It is ever man's problem to equate death with an end of existence, but it does not necessarily mean that. For mankind it is the end of existence in one state and the beginning of existence in another state. When man dies physically the first time, the body ceases to have consciousness or senses but not so at the second death.

Of man's three parts, only the body ever dies so that it is without the senses and without consciousness. But the soul is never without the senses. It is never not conscious. If it should be argued that the body dies in the second death, it must be remembered that the senses are part of the soul, not the body. This is clearly evident in many Scriptures, especially in the account of the rich man who went to hell and he had his senses and his memory in hell. He also spoke of the bodily part, the tongue and that he wished something cool for his tongue.

However, the body is resurrected at the judgment and body, soul and spirit are thrown into hell. This is the second death. It would hardly make sense to resurrect the body and then burn it up. The second death is to be forever separated from God in all of man's parts.

So to answer Raegan, the second death does not mean an end of conscious, sensuous existence. From all I can find, it is the beginning of eternal suffering.

D. Problem Of The Term 'Destruction'

We come then to Raegan's fourth point against the traditional view of hell. He writes:

A fourth reason the traditional view has always troubled me is that it seems to ignore an important biblical teaching about Hell; namely, that Hell is a place of destruction. Jesus Himself spoke of Hell as a place of "destruction" ([Matthew 7:13](#)). Further, in [Matthew 10:28](#) Jesus said: *"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."*

Likewise, in [2 Thessalonians 1:9](#) Paul says that those who do not obey the gospel *"will pay the penalty of eternal destruction."* The writer of Hebrews says that the unrighteous will experience a terrifying judgment that will result in their consumption by fire ([Hebrews 10:27](#)). Even one of the most comforting verses in the Bible speaks of the destruction of the unrighteous: *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life"* ([John 3:16](#)).

The traditionalist argument that the word "destroy" or "destruction" should be interpreted as "irreparable loss" seems a stretch to me. It seems much more likely that "destroy" should be taken to mean exactly that.

So we want to consider this difficulty. Raegan says that the traditionalist understanding of the word 'to destroy' which they say means irreparable loss, is a stretch to him. Then he says it should more likely be taken to mean exactly that, but he doesn't explain what 'exactly that' means. I would gather that he means it means to annihilate. To annihilate would mean to burn up in hell and becoming non-existent. The person is gone. The person has then ceased to exist.

A verse Raegan gives is Matthew 10:28 which says:

28 *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*

The original NT word given as 'destroy' in that verse is *apollumi*. It comes from the root word 'holethros', which the online Bible says means to ruin, destroy, or death. He says the traditionalist says it means something like irreparable loss.

The word, 'appolumi' occurs 92 times in the NT so we can get a good idea of what it means. The KJV has translated it 'to perish' 33 times, 'to destroy' 26 times, 'to lose' 5 times and it has 4 miscellaneous uses.

I would see the base meaning of this word as to render something useless for that for which it was made.

By the way, go to Revelation 9. The Apostle John is describing the first of three woes. So we begin in verse 1:

1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.

3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

7 The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.

8 They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth.

9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle.

10 They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months.

11 And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

These demons have a king over them who is the angel of the bottomless pit. In Hebrew his name is Abaddon. In Greek it is Apollyon. John Bunyan mentions him in his book, "Pilgrim's Progress". This word 'Apollyon' means the destroyer. It comes from the word apollumi. He is not the one who destroys people by annihilating them. He destroys them by rendering them useless for that for which they were made, which is to glorify God.

W. E. Vine, who has done one of the best dictionaries of Greek words, and who is a traditionalist with regard to hell and he says this of the word 'to destroy':

"The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being." He then gives examples and we'll look at a few.

We go to Mark 2:22 which says, in the KJV:

22 "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins."

Notice the word marred. It is the word apollumi, the word translated 'to destroy' in Matthew 10:28. These wine bottles were the skins of animals that were sewed up and filled with grape juice. When new grape juice was put into old wineskin it caused fermentation and

fermentation is so powerful it will burst the skins. Go now to Luke 5, and I'll read from the KJV again. It says:

37 *"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined.*

Note that it says the wineskins will be ruined. That is the same word as rendered 'marred' in Mark 2:22 and which was rendered 'destroy' in Matthew 10:28. Now when these wineskins were ruined, they were not annihilated. They were rendered useless for that for which they had been made.

We go now to Matthew 10:28, the verse Reagan quoted. It says:

28 *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy <622> both soul and body in hell.*

The word 'to destroy' is *appollumi*. This word occurs a number of times in this chapter. So go to verse 42. It says:

42 *"And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means **lose** <622> his reward."*

In this verse the word 'to lose' is our word. It can have the idea of to lose. But you can see the base idea still holds true. If something is lost it is rendered useless for that for which it was designed. It does not necessarily mean it ceases to exist.

Now go to verse 6. It says:

6 *"But go rather to the lost <622> sheep of the house of Israel.*

The word translated lost again is our word. The lost sheep of the house of Israel were not annihilated. By failing to recognize God for who He is they were

rendered useless for that for which they had been created. Most certainly they still existed.

In some uses one might get the idea of something ceasing to exist. Matthew 5:29 says:

29 "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish <622>, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

In this verse we could have the idea of something ceasing to exist. But we still have the idea of it being rendered useless for that for which it was created. Verse 30 gives the same idea with regard to the right hand.

But look now at Matthew 10:39. It says:

10:39 "He who finds his life will lose <622> it, and he who loses <622> his life for My sake will find it.

Twice the word *appolumi* is translated 'to lose'. Now before we go further, the word translated life is *psuchee*, meaning *soul*. He who finds his soul will lose it. Remember the rich man who said to his soul, "Soul eat, soul drink, soul be merry"? This is the man who finds his soul. He lives for the pleasures of this life. Where does he lose it to? To hell! Then Jesus said, "...and he who loses his soul for My sake shall find it." What is the meaning of this? He who gives up seeking to find fulfillment in the soul in this life only, and gives those things up to follow the Lord will find it. What does that mean? He will find true fulfillment and will go to glory at death. So once again Jesus said, "He who lives and believes in Me shall never die." The idea in both cases, as I see it, has nothing to do with ceasing to exist.

Go now to John 3:16. It says:

3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The word translated 'perish' here is *apollumi*. Like the wine bottles, a person who does not believe in Christ perishes, *appolumi*, when he dies. He loses his soul. He does not cease to exist, he ceases to be in a form in which he can do that for which he was made. And what was he made for? To glorify God and spend eternity with him.

I want to now make a statement and I would appreciate any correction to it if you have one. Here it is: I find in Scripture that at conception the entire person comes into existence; the self, the body, soul and spirit with all their parts. And I do not find anywhere that any person who is conceived can ever come to an end or be annihilated. All persons must exist somewhere forever, once they come into being. Suicide does not end one's existence but it renders one useless for that for which one was made and puts one in the place called hell. There are only two places to exist after death, there is no purgatory.

CONCL: And to conclude, we have been looking at the problems David Raegan finds with the traditionalist view of hell. And we saw that his first problem was with relation to the character of God. How could a God of grace and mercy and love put someone in hell forever? But God is not only gracious, merciful and loving; He is also holy and just and righteous.

Raegan's second problem was with regard to biblical examples. When God had man destroy man, it was quickly, not with long torment. This is even true of animals. That is because God said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." God will do justice and when He does it, it will be done 100% right.

The third problem was the problem of the second death. His question was, "How can Hell be a 'second death' if it consists of eternal, conscious torment?" Well, that is because death does not mean one is not conscious. This is so clearly illustrated in the account of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man had experienced the first death. His body had been separated from the spirit, and his soul had been separated from God. There was no more opportunity to be saved.

In the second death, the body is reunited to soul and spirit, and then the person is separated from God forever. This is the second death. The second death does not do away with conscious, sensuous existence any more than the first death does. And here is my concluding question: If it is true that there is an everlasting hell, what manner of people ought we to be?

