

Doom Awaits Every Unbelieving Sinner

Matthew 23:27-33

I believe we would be hard pressed to find more shocking and stunning words in the Bible than what we read in verse 33, “how can ye escape the damnation of hell? What horror! What judgment! Christ himself preached hell and damnation, and the people he was speaking to were the Scribes and Pharisees-the religious leaders of Israel.

The name Pharisee basically means *separatists* from impurity and defilement. The Pharisees were self righteous people. Christ illustrates this in Luke 18:10-14, “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to

me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

The Pharisees did works to be seen of men. Pretension was a common trait of the Pharisees. Christ said of them, "But all their works they do for to be seen of men" (Matt. 23: 5). They loved attention and religious titles (Matt. 23: 6-9).

The Pharisees made void the commandments of God. They were often more concerned about keeping their own traditions than God's law. Christ rebukes the Pharisees in Mark 7:9, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.”

Most alarming of all was that the Pharisees opposed Christ. We read in Matthew 22:15, “Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.” They did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, and they plotted to kill Him. “And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.” (Mark 3:6)

Christ represents the condition of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:33 as desperate, “How can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

John Gill writes in his commentary, “The phrase, "the judgment, or damnation of hell," is a phrase often used in the Talmud of the Jews; and intends future torment, and the everlasting vengeance and wrath of God, the unquenchable fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and which impenitent unbelieving sinners cannot escape.”

The message of Christ to the Pharisees was because of their unbelief doom awaited them. Matthew Henry writes, “Of all sinners, those who are of the spirit of the scribes and Pharisees, are least likely to escape this damnation; for repentance and faith are necessary to that escape; and how will *they* be brought to these, who are so conceited of themselves, and so prejudiced against Christ and his gospel, as they were? How could *they* be healed and saved, who could not bear to have their wound searched, nor the balm of Gilead applied to it?”

The same doom that awaited the Pharisees because of their unbelief awaits every unbelieving sinner today. Therefore, the title of my message is, “Doom Awaits Every Unbelieving Sinner.”

I want to clarify that doom awaits unbelieving sinners, not saved sinners. If you are here today and you believe in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ then you will never experience the doom mentioned in Matthew 23:33.

But for those of you here today and fall into the same group as the Pharisees, unbelieving sinners, doom awaits you. “How can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Those are not my words but the words of Christ. There are four things that I would like to consider from the message today.

1. The doom for the unbelieving sinner is fierce.

We read in I Thess. 2:16, “for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” Who are *them*? It refers to all unbelieving sinners.

Jonathan Edwards writes in his sermon, *Sinners In The Hands Of An Angry God*, “It is the **fierceness** of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of

the fury of God; as in Isaiah 59:18, "*According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries.*" So Isaiah 66:15, "*For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.*" And in many other places. So, Rev. 19:15, we read of "*the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*" The words are exceeding terrible. If it had only been said, "the wrath of God," the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: but it is "the fierceness and wrath of God." The fury of God! the fierceness of Jehovah! Oh, how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is also "the fierceness and wrath of **Almighty** God." As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! then, what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worms that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong? And whose heart can endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!"

We read in Psalm 2:12, “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.”

You may be thinking to yourself, unbelieving sinner, that Christ is a loving God, and therefore, I will be spared from the wrath to come. Christ is also a God of justice, and therefore sin must be judged. Either God’s wrath must fall on Christ who died on the Cross as a substitute for sinners, or wrath must fall on you, unbelieving sinner, who are still guilty of your sins.

The Scripture exhorts sinners, “To flee from the wrath to come. Repent of your sins and flee to Christ for full and free salvation! Christ came to rescue the perishing. Christ came into the world to save sinners.

The Doom for the unbelieving sinner is fierce.

2. The doom for the unbelieving sinner is forever.

Hell is a place reserved for unrepentant sinners after death, where they suffer separation from God. Today, many unbelieving sinners are the beneficiaries of God's Common Grace. It is "common" because its benefits are experienced by, or intended for, the whole human race without distinction between one person and another.

But in hell there will be no grace, no comfort, and no happiness. Hell is a place of torment for the damned, and there is no end to it. It is forever, and ever.

There are times when I experience pain and sorrow in my life. The fact that I can see an end to it, that I can see light at the end of the tunnel comforts me, and helps me through. But in hell there is no light at the end of the tunnel, just outer darkness with no comfort or hope ever. This is the place that awaits you, unbelieving sinner.

Again Jonathan Edwards writes "It is **everlasting** wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to

this exquisite horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long for ever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: For "who knows the power of God's anger?"

The Doom for the unbelieving sinner is forever.

3. The doom for the unbelieving sinner is inescapable.

“How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?,” said Christ

It was impossible that the Pharisees could in their spirit of unbelief escape such doom, and so it is the same for every unbelieving sinner; To whom, or what can you have recourse to, to screen you from the wrath to come? Rocks and mountains, caves and dens, will be of no service.

We read Revelation 6:15-17 “And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

There are many unbelieving sinners in hell today and they will never escape the torment and misery of that awful place.

They can't dig out. They can't climb out. They can't break out. They can't talk their way out. No one has ever escaped, nor ever will escape from the fiery prison of hell.

We read a story in Luke 16:19-31 about a man who asked for a reprieve in hell and his request was denied, “There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 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; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 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. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place

of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

The doom for the unbelieving sinner is inescapable.

4. The doom for the unbelieving sinner is certain.

Because it comes from a trustworthy source, Christ. There are men who make predictions from the Bible such as the date for the second coming of Christ. They predict that Christ will return on such and such a date, and people believe them. The date comes and goes and Christ does not return as these men said He would.

Conversely, when Christ says something it will happen. “How can ye escape the damnation of hell,” are words of certainty for those who are unbelieving sinners. Doomsday is coming.

Just as Johah preached to that wicked city Nineveh of coming doom and destruction, “Yet forty days, and

Nineveh shall be overthrown,” Christ warns unbelieving sinners of certain judgment. Repent or perish! That was the message of Jonah, and that is the message of Christ.

How did the people in Nineveh respond to Jonah’s message of gloom and doom? We read in Jonah 3:5-10, “ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.”

Imagine if our world leaders followed the example of the King of Nineveh and repented, humbled, and turned themselves to Christ for mercy and grace.

The people in Nineveh believed God. They turned away from their wickedness and turned to God for salvation.

We read in Micah 7: 18, “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

The message in Matthew 23:33 is, “Doom awaits unbelieving sinners.” Are you a saved sinner? Washed in the blood of the Lamb? Praise the Lord! You have much to be thankful for. See what doom Christ has delivered you from. Or are you an unbelieving sinner? Sin has hardened your heart to Christ. You don’t trust and believe in the Lord. I implore you to repent of your sins and ask Jesus Christ to save you from the doom that awaits every unbelieving sinner.

Let us pray.