

# STUDY NOTES

## HELL

### A SERIES AT NEW CITY CHURCH

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The following content is based on the message “Hell (What the...)” spoken on 09/11/16 by Brian Kruckenberg at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis of the message but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

## PRAYER

*Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.*

## THE SCRIPTURE: MARK 9:42-48

## HELL CANNOT BE IGNORED

Jesus speaks about Hell/Gehenna more than any other person in the Bible. In spite of that, only about 70% of Christians believe that Hell exists.

- *What are some reasons that you think people (us included) don't want to talk about Hell?*

## BIBLICAL IMAGERY

While everything in the Bible is literally true, not everything is always true literally. The Bible describes the reality of Hell through forceful figures of speech like, **darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth, eternal fire, bottomless pit, and prison** (see Scripture References included at the end).

- *Why do you think the biblical imagery to describe Hell is so strong?*

## NATURE OF HELL

The Bible does not describe it as a “torture chamber” where people are forced against their will to be tortured by others. This is a caricature. However, **Hell is torment.**

Jesus said it was (Luke 16:24) torment, but unlike torture which is inflicted from without, against one's will, torment can be **self-inflicted**. Torment is living with the consequences of our own choices. Think of Hell as being **locked from the inside**.

- *Why do you think it is important to distinguish that Hell is torment, not torture?*
- *How would your view of God change if you believed that he was torturing people in Hell?*

## SIN IS WHAT LEADS TO ETERNAL HELL

If heaven is having your identity rooted in Jesus forever, then Hell is having your identity rooted in sin forever. Tim Keller says this:

**“Hell is a chosen identity based on something else beside God going on forever.”**

Heaven has no place for sin, and will sin won't be able to get into this new city (Rev 22:15).

- *When you find yourself basing your identity on something other than God, how have you experienced that identity tormenting you?*
- *What does knowing that sin won't be able to get into heaven stir up within you?*

## JESUS DEFEATED HELL

Jesus descended into Hell on the cross, and he took on Hell. That shows you His love because He lost relationship with His father, if even for a moment, to take on death and Hell. This is costly love. Love without a cost is a “nice” story but it isn't deep love. It is nice, but it isn't transformational. True love comes at a cost and requires a cost!

**Jesus is patient and wants everyone to repent. He doesn't want any one to perish.**

*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 2 PETER 3:9*

- *Share about how you have grown to realize that true love is costly.*
- *How can you love a God who allows people to go to Hell?*
- *How should the reality of Hell change the way that we live with God and others?*

## SCRIPTURE FOR REFERENCE & DEEPER STUDY

### HADES (SHEOL)

Sheol differs from the doctrine of Hell: it is the place where all the dead are gathered indiscriminately, saints and the sinners. **Sheol but almost always it is a place of weakness and joylessness.**

Scripture describing Sheol:

- Below the surface of the earth (Ezk. 31:15, 17; Ps. 86:13),
- A place of dust (Jb. 17:16), darkness (Jb. 10:21), silence (Ps. 94:17) and forgetfulness (Ps. 88:12).

In Jewish literature we see divisions within Sheol for the wicked and the righteous. This idea appears to underlie the imagery of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Lk. 16:19–31. The Greek word “hadēs” used in this passage represents the underworld, or realm of the dead, in classic literature. **Hades is the NT equivalent of Sheol.**

Scripture describing Hades:

- You will **descend** to Hades (Mt 11:23);
- The **gates** of Hades will not prevail against it (Mt 16:18);
- You will be **brought down** to Hades (Lk 10:15);
- In Hades he **lifted up his eyes** (Lk 16:23);
- For you will not **abandon my soul to Hades** (Acts 2:27, 31)
- I have the keys of **death** and of Hades (Rv 1:18);
- Hades was following with him (Rev 6:8);
- Then **death** and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:13-14)

### GEHENNA/HELL

Gehenna/Hell was a valley south of Jerusalem known as “Valley of Hinnom.” It became infamous for its sacrificial site where children were offered to the god Molech during the evil reigns of kings in the Old Testament (2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6). King Josiah came in and reformed it so that children no longer would be sacrificed there (2 Kings 23:10). **This valley was known as a burning dump.** (Mt 5:22, 29, 30; Mt 10:28; Mk 9:43, 45, 47; Lk 12:5; Jas 3:6; 2C 5.4;18:9; 23:15, 33)

**The Bible describes the reality of hell in forceful figures of speech:**

- A place of **darkness** where there is **weeping and gnashing of teeth.**(Matt. 8:12; 22:13)
- Jesus describes hell as an **eternal fire** (Matt 25:41) and an **abyss** (Luke 8:31)
- It is like being left **outside** in the dark forever (Matt. 8:12)
- A **perpetually burning dump** (Mark 9:43–48)
- A **bottomless pit** (Rev. 20:1, 3)

- A **prison** (1 Peter 3:19)
- A place of **anguish** (Luke 16:28)

There are some other things that we know about hell which we have to balance with these figures of speech listed above.

- **Away from the “presence of the Lord”** (Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:7–9).
- People will have **physical bodies** (John 5:28–29; Rev. 20:13–15).
- Jesus said it was **torment** (Luke 16:24).

### IS IT REALLY FOREVER?

**Heaven is described as “everlasting” in the Bible.**

The same Greek word used to affirm that hell is “everlasting” is also used in the same sentence to affirm that heaven is “everlasting”. (Matt. 25:41; cf. vs. 46; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:10).