

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 12 July 2026. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Eternal Darkness of Hell

Around the turn of the 20th century, a famous author named O. Henry wrote a short story entitled “The Unfinished Story.” This story exposed the harsh living conditions of underpaid shop girls in New York City; and it was so controversial, that one of New York’s prominent newspapers reneged on their contract with O. Henry on that particular week, and refused to publish the story.¹ Yet, interestingly enough, no one seemed to consider the *very first words* of his story to be controversial or disturbing. The opening paragraph of the story went like this:

“We no longer groan and heap ashes upon our heads when the flames of Tophet are mentioned. For, even the preachers have begun to tell us that God is radium, or ether, or some scientific compound, and that the worst we wicked ones may expect is a chemical reaction. This is a pleasing hypothesis.”²

O. Henry could see that belief in a real Hell was quickly fading; and he, for one, was delighted to throw out the notion of eternal judgment for sinners. Yet, the tidal waves of unbelief in O Henry’s Day were nothing compared to the tsunami of unbelief that would soon be rolling over the entire world. By the mid-twentieth century, a well-known Protestant theologian named Martin Marty wrote, “Hell [has] disappeared. And no one noticed. For liberal Protestants, hell began to fade in the nineteenth century....Today, hell is theology’s H-word, a subject too trite for serious scholarship.”³ A Harvard theologian named Gordon Kaufman said, “I don’t think there can be any future for heaven or hell.”⁴ In other words, he didn’t foresee that *anyone* would believe in Heaven or Hell before long.

The consensus of modern man seems to be nearly unanimous: “There is no judgment in the afterlife!” However, God’s Word has not changed. The Lord says: ***“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”*** The flames of Hell are just as real as the hottest iron refinery on earth; and the darkness of Hell is just as real as the blackest cave on earth. Repeatedly, the Bible warns us that Hell is a place of “outer darkness”—the very opposite of Heaven. In one of our messages about Heaven, we saw that the Light Source of Heaven is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The city of New Jerusalem will be perpetually filled with the dazzling glory of the Lord God Almighty. The eternal day of Heaven will be a reminder of the truth that ***“God is light,”*** and that ***“in him is no darkness at all.”*** Jesus Christ is the ***“Light of the world”***; and therefore, those who follow Him ***“shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”*** The spiritual light of Christ’s presence in the believer’s soul will, in Heaven, be expressed *outwardly* by the brilliance that will emanate from Christ Himself. This truth is a source of comfort to every believer in Jesus Christ. However, the opposite reality for the lost is frightening beyond imagination. If Heaven be a place of everlasting light (since it is the place where God manifests His presence), then Hell is a place of everlasting darkness, since it is a place where God’s loving, comforting presence is never known or felt. This morning, we will be talking about the blackness of Hell, in this message which I’ve entitled ***The Eternal Darkness of Hell.***

Read Jude 3-13.

I. “Chains of darkness” are reserved for demons.

In a message a couple weeks ago, we learned that there is a portion of Satan’s demonic host that was cast into the bottomless pit many centuries ago, shortly after the Flood; and, as we just read in **Jude**, God is keeping these demons in chains until a future day, when He will use them for the purpose of judging rebellious mankind. At some point in the latter half of the seven-year Tribulation period, God will release these demons from the bottomless pit for a period of five months, and will allow them to hurt and torment those on earth who do not have God’s seal on them (in other words, those who have rejected Christ, and taken the Antichrist’s mark). In **Revelation 9**, the Apostle John recorded that he saw an angel with a great key in his hand, who *“opened the bottomless pit”*; and when the pit was opened, *“there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.”* These hideous, locust-scorpion-like demons will be the closest thing to a literal “Hell on earth” that this world will have yet seen. The spiritual world of the Abyss will literally overlap with the physical world. The sun and the air will *actually be darkened* by the clouds of brimstone (or “burning sulphur”) that will belch out from the underworld!

However, this won’t be the last visit from the underworld. Immediately after the demon-locust plague is over, God will release four demons that have been chained in the Euphrates River for centuries, and will allow them to become the captains of yet another enormous demon army, which will be released from the Abyss. This army of demons will number 200 *million*! (And that’s not counting the horse-lion-like demon creatures on which the 200 million demon horsemen will ride!) These demons will have breastplates of literal fire. They will also belch out smoke, fire, and brimstone from their mouths; and with the smoke, fire, and brimstone, a whopping *one third* of earth’s population will die! The fire, smoke, and brimstone of Hell will literally be brought up to earth, on the very “persons” of these demons. They will be released from the bottomless pit for a season; but even then, the fire of Hell will go with them. They themselves will still be in torment; and they will be eager to vent their wrath on mankind.

Now, what was the crime for which these demons were cast early into the Abyss? Well, let’s go back to **Genesis** once again, and see what the Lord said about these wicked angels.

Read Genesis 6:1-4, 8-12.

Make no mistake about it: these “*sons of God*” who went in to “*the daughters of men*” were *not* men. They were *not* the descendants of Seth, who intermarried with the daughters of Cain: these were *unholy angels* who cohabited with *women*, and created a hybrid race of giants. Throughout the Old Testament, the term “*sons of God*” always refers to angels, not to men.

Now, to many believers, this is confusing—and understandably so. After all, how *could* demons have relations with human women? Didn’t Jesus say that believers in Heaven will be “*like unto the angels*,” in that they won’t marry? Yes, Jesus did say that *God’s* angels do not marry. However, we’re not talking about *God’s holy* angels: we’re talking about *Satan’s unholy* angels, who are bent on crossing over all God’s boundaries, and perverting everything that God has created. Do I *understand* how demon-human relations would work? No. But what I *do* know is that it is recorded in God’s Word. I also know that this theme of demon-human relations is now being glorified and promoted in today’s pop Rock songs, and in the movies. You don’t have to look far to find it. It is *everywhere* now (which is exactly what we would expect to see in these last days before Christ’s return). Just as God’s angels often take on a human form and interact with people, to the point of eating food with them, so Satan’s demons can take on human form, and cohabit with women. By the way, many “transhumanist” scientists today are pushing the idea of *mixing animal genes with human genes*, in order to create an “evolutionary upgrade” of the human race—a “human 2.0,” as they call it. (We know, for a fact, that some scientists have already mixed animal genes with animal genes; and there is probably much more of this “Frankenstein” experimentation going on in the labs than we’d like to believe!) Now, if *men* are smart enough, and wicked enough, to do such an abominable thing as to mix animal and human genes, how much more capable are *demons* of doing such a thing? Demons may not have their own genome to mix with the human genome; but they certainly can mix animal and human genomes, with the cooperation of willing humans.

A large portion of Satan’s demonic kingdom *did*, in fact, commit this great crime 4,400 years ago; and they did it for one main purpose—to create a race of men who are *unredeemable*. Satan knew that God had promised to send a Seed—a descendant of Eve—who would one day provide salvation for all mankind; and to ensure that this would never happen, Satan tried to corrupt the genome of humanity, so that *no one* would be a complete descendant of Adam. It seems that they were largely successful in this, too, because **Genesis 6:13** says that “*All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.*” The Messiah Himself could never be born into the human race if the human race were no longer true descendants of Adam, but a *hybrid* race!

This was Satan’s masterplan to derail God’s plan of salvation. However, he did not succeed. According to James, the angels who took part in this wicked scheme have been placed under “*chains of darkness.*” In **2 Peter 2:4**, Peter says this exact same thing—except that he adds one more detail. Peter reminds his readers of how “*God spared not the angels that sinned,*

*but cast them down to **hell**, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.*” Peter specifically says that these demons were cast into “**hell**”; and the word for “Hell” that Peter uses is the Greek word **Tartarus**. In Greek mythology, Tartarus was the name for a deep abyss in the netherworld, where wicked souls were sent to be tortured in a dungeon in the afterlife. Though this word was used in pagan mythology, Peter wasn’t afraid to equate it with the Hebrew word *she-ol*—the “pit.” Pagan theology was very corrupted; but one thing they did have right is that there *is* a deep, fiery pit for the wicked after death.

Tartarus is simply another word for the place of eternal darkness that God has prepared for the devil and his angels; and it will one day be experienced by the *entire* demonic kingdom, after they have been judged, and have been made to bow to Christ, and call Him “Lord.”

My friends, Hell is a place of eternal smoke and darkness; and if even the *earth’s* atmosphere will temporarily be darkened by the smoke that will arise from this subterranean inferno, how much darker must Hell itself be? There will be no partying in Hell, or freedom of any kind: there will be only chains of darkness.

II. “Chains of darkness” are reserved for apostate teachers.

Read 2 Peter 2:1-17.

Satan and his demons aren’t the only ones who will experience the horrifying darkness of Hell. According to Peter and Jude, **apostate teachers** (false teachers who have rejected the truth of God’s Word) will be appointed to the eternal “**blackness of darkness**,” too. Apostates, Jude says, are like “**raging waves of the sea**,” and like “**wandering stars**,” in that they are always wandering farther and farther from the truth, and are spiritually unstable, like churning waves of the sea. Not only are *they* unstable, but they cause their followers, whom they have abused and made merchandise of, to be unstable and self-destructive, as well. And what will be their end? The “**mist of darkness**” (or the “**blackness of darkness**”) *for ever.*”

The fate of the “**angels that left their first estate**” (the demons that are now in Hell) is a warning to apostate teachers of every stripe. Satan’s demons, powerful though they are, will not be able to resist the Lord when He commands them to be bound in chains of darkness forever. How, then, can sinful men, who have denied the Lord, despised His sacrifice, turned from the truth, stomped on Christ’s precious New Covenant, and led others astray, expect to escape the darkness of Hell, if they will not repent? **Deuteronomy 27:18** says, “**Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way.**” Jesus Himself said of the religious rulers of Israel, “**They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.**” (And make no mistake about it: the ultimate “ditch” into which they will fall

is Hell!) **Hebrews 10:26-29** says, *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”*

Tragically, apostates have, themselves, often been brought up and nurtured in the very damnable doctrines that they now teach to others (such as denial that the Bible is divinely inspired, or that Jesus is God, or that Jesus was born of a virgin, or that God is Triune, or that salvation is by God's grace alone, through faith, and not of works). However, this is no excuse. When apostates stand before God, God will not let them off the hook because they didn't know any better. God has sounded forth His truth unto the end of the world, through the witness of nature, of conscience, and His written Word: and He commands all men to seek after Him, and find Him. “But, Pastor, what about those who have never heard the Scriptures? Will *they* be pardoned?” No, they will not. Yet, the Bible does make it clear that there will be greater *degrees of judgment* for those who knew the truth of God's Word, yet who rejected it—and especially for those who led others astray, to boot. In **Luke 12:46-47**, Jesus compared His return to earth to the return of a master from a far country; and He makes it clear that there *will* be a reckoning for those servants who knew His will, yet refused to submit to Him, and serve Him. Jesus said, *“But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”*

Darkness is reserved for Satan and his demons; and it is also reserved for apostates who have rejected the truth. However, outer darkness is reserved not only for demons, and for apostate teachers. *All* who reject the Lord will be chained in darkness!

III. “Chains of darkness” are reserved for all unrepentant sinners.

All of us entered this world in a state of spiritual darkness; and our natural inclination is to reject the light of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come*

into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.” All of us, in our natural, sinful state, love our sin, and recoil from the light of Christ’s righteousness—and for much the same reason that cockroaches scurry away from light. Roaches are nocturnal creatures that fear the light, because the presence of light may mean that they are about to be crushed; and likewise, sinners fear the light of Christ, because they rightly perceive that His judgment is hovering over them, and is ready to crush them. What they fail to realise, however, is that this same God who must judge sin has, in love and mercy, *taken our judgment* upon Himself! Christ was crushed by the judgment of our sin, as He hung on the cross; and He suffered the eternal darkness of separation from His Father in three hours of earth time, so that *we* might enjoy the eternal light of His presence in Heaven!

The reward of our sin is to spend eternity in darkness, cut off from the light of God’s love, truth, and faithfulness. Anyone who has experienced the nearly 100% darkness of a cave, for even ten seconds, can understand how horrifying the blackness of Hell must be! Have you ever been in a cave, and seen how pitch black it is when they turn off the lights? You can’t even see your hand in front of your face. You can *feel* the darkness! *That* is what Hell is like. By the way, perhaps you’re wondering how people in Hell will be aware of the presence of other sufferers around them (as we read in **Ezekiel 32**)—or how they are able to see believers enjoying Paradise (as the rich man was able to do)—if Hell be a place of “outer darkness.” You may also wonder: “How will Hell be completely black, if Hell be a place of flame? Flames emit light!” The answer is: “I don’t know: but I’m *really* glad that I won’t be there to find out!” Folks, Hell is a spiritual realm, which isn’t subject to the laws of physics as we know them. We don’t need to understand the physics of Hell: all we need to know is that God has warned us about Hell, and has told us to ***“Flee from the wrath to come!”***

Hell is a place of utter darkness; yet, the blackness of Hell will simply be an outward expression of the *inner* spiritual darkness of its inhabitants. The darkness of Hell will be an eternal reminder to sinners that they are everlastingly separated from the loving, faithful, holy God, who is “Light.” They will never know the joy, peace of mind, and relief from the awful burden of guilt, that Christ could have given them, if they had only received it.

Friends, God is no respecter of persons. He will not give “special treatment” to anyone—no matter what nation, ethnicity, religious profession, or societal status that person may be. Eternal darkness is reserved for every soul who rejects, or simply neglects, the free gift of salvation that Christ purchased on Calvary.

Read Matthew 8:5-12.

In this passage, we are told of a time when a Roman centurion boldly came to the Lord Jesus, and asked that Jesus heal his servant, who was grievously tormented with palsy. So confident was this man that Jesus had the authority, in Himself, to heal his servant, that he humbly bade Jesus not even to come under his roof, but simply to say the word, and his servant would be healed. After hearing this request, Jesus turned to the crowd and said, ***“Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many (meaning, many Gentiles) shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But,”*** He said, ***“the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*** Simply put, Jesus was saying that many of His own people, the Jews, for whom the coming 1,000-year Kingdom has been specially prepared, will one day be cast into the ***“outer darkness”*** of Hell, because they refused to repent and believe on Him as their Messiah. In contrast, many Gentiles will come from every direction, and will join the Jewish patriarchs of old in the Kingdom, because they *did* believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. God does not desire for anyone to be cast into outer darkness; but those who reject the Light cannot be permitted to abide in the light of God’s presence.

Read Matthew 22:1-14.

In the account of the Roman centurion that we read a few moments ago, Jesus literally and plainly stated that many ***“children of the kingdom”*** will be ***“cast out into outer darkness,”*** where there will be ***“weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*** However, Jesus warned of the darkness of Hell in His *parables*, as well. In the **Matthew 22** passage that we just read, Jesus told the parable of a king who hosted a great wedding feast for his son. However, the first round of guests, whom he had specially invited to the feast, refused to come. Some of them were simply indifferent to the invitation, while others were hostile toward the king’s messengers, and even slew some of them. Therefore, the king destroyed the murderers; and he then sent out his servants into the ***“highways and hedges,”*** to invite everyone that they saw to come to the feast. Everyone was now invited to the wedding feast; yet, there was one simple condition to be admitted into the feast: namely, every guest had to put on **a special wedding garment** that the king had provided. One man, though, thinking that this stipulation didn’t apply to him, tried to get into the wedding feast without wearing the king’s garment. When the king saw this man, he commanded his servants to ***“Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”***

What does this parable mean? The king represents **God the Father**; the son represents **God’s Son**, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the *first round of guests* represents the greater part of the **Jewish people** in Jesus’ day, who rejected Him as their Saviour (whether out of indifference, or hostility). The *second round of guests* (the ***“highways and hedges”*** guests) represents the **Gentiles**—those who are not Jews, but who are equally invited to receive God’s free gift of salvation. However, that ***“wedding garment”*** implies *a condition*, on everyone’s part, for entering God’s Kingdom. This wedding garment represents the “robe” of Christ’s imputed

righteousness, which covers our sins. By our own righteousness *none* of us (Jew or Gentile) can get into God's Kingdom. However, when you place your faith in Christ and His sacrifice on the cross, it is as though you are putting on a "robe" of Christ's own perfect righteousness. Those who refuse to put on this robe (though they may be ever so religious), and who trust in their own goodness and righteousness instead, will be cast into the "***outer darkness***" of Hell, where there will be "***weeping and gnashing of teeth.***"

Read Matthew 25:14-30.

In this parable, Jesus tells of a servant whose master gave him one talent to invest for him while he was away on business; yet, he did absolutely nothing with that talent. Instead of investing the talent, and increasing his master's wealth, He buried it in the earth. When the master returned, he demanded that his servants give an account of what they had done with the talents that had been given them; and when he saw that this servant had done absolutely nothing with his talent, he was very angry. He commanded his servants to "***cast...the unprofitable servant into outer darkness,***" where "***there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.***" The meaning of this parable is clear: Christ has gone back to the "***far country***" of Heaven; and He is coming back to earth one day. In the meantime, He has given people **His Word** (as represented by the talent), so that they might believe on Him, and be saved—and then use His Word to lead others to Christ, and thus increase His Kingdom. However, those who neglect God's Word, and refuse to believe on Christ, and serve Him with their lives, will be cast into the "outer darkness" of Hell.

IV. The "light of life" is available to all repentant sinners

Read John 8:12.

My friends, Jesus is the Light of the World. If you have never received God's gift of salvation, Christ has given you His Word today, so that you might know how to be saved; and the very first truth that you must understand and acknowledge is that in God's sight, you are not a good person. (None of us are!) The Bible says, "***As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.***" There is no spiritual light in any of us: therefore, the only way we have access to the Light is through God's Word. The Bible reveals Christ as the Saviour of the world, and as the Light that shines in darkness. However, Christ will not force His light on you. You must respond to the Light of Christ while He is offering Himself to you!

Read John 12:35-36.

Conclusion: Many people sense that they are groping around in darkness in their lives; and they *say* that they are searching for truth. Yet, when exposed to the Light, most people run from Him. *Why* do people run from the very thing they say that they want? Because Light (the *true* Light) exposes what is in the darkness; and sinners don't like to be exposed. If you allow the light of Christ to shine on you, He *will* expose all the ugly sin that you had hoped God didn't notice; and you will be horrified by your own sin. But that's a *good* thing! You will never see your need of the Saviour until you see your sin for what it really is, and run to the One who can take your sin away. Stop thinking that God will let you into Heaven because you've lived a good life. You are *not* good! Acknowledge that your sin has separated you from God; and in simple faith and repentance, ask Jesus to forgive you of all your sins, and save your soul. Christ will then enter your heart, and begin to fill you with His glorious light! And best of all, you will *never* experience the blackness of Hell, but will spend eternity in the city where there is no night.

If you are saved already, never forget that you have no light in and of yourself. Any true goodness that people see in you is *Christ's* light in you. Don't hide that light under a bushel! Let Christ shine forth from your life, so that lost folk can see the Light, come to the Light, and be saved!

¹ O. Henry, "An Unfinished Story," <https://www.loa.org/news-and-views/1873-o-henry-8220an-unfinished-story8221/>

² O. Henry, *Tales of O. Henry* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1993), p. 57.

³ Robert J. Morgan, *Preacher's Sourcebook of Creative Sermon Illustrations* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007), p. 429.

⁴ *Ibid.*