Eternity

We are in a series on Eternity.

What happens after we die?

Wha does the Bible say about Heaven and what does the Bible say about Hell?

It's amazing to me that people will buy up every book they can on near-death experiences but never take a deep-dive into what the Bible says about eternity.

Well today, we're going to finish our series with one last look at what the Bible says about Hell.

Perhaps you've heard the story about the first grader who was drawing a picture of Jonah in the belly of a whale.

His teacher asked him what he was drawing. He said, "It's a picture of Jonah and the whale."

The teacher said, "That's a great story, but you know it's just a story, right?" Billy said, "It's not just a story; it really happened. Jonah disobeyed God and was eaten by a whale. He asked God to forgive him, and the fish spit him out."

The teacher said, "Now Johnny, do you really believe all that?"

He said, "Yes, and one day I'll go to Heaven and ask Jonah all about it."

The teacher said, "Well, what if Jonah didn't go to Heaven?"

Johnny thought for a second and said, "Then I guess one day you can ask him!"

Matthew 7:13-14 KJV

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: [14] Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

In most cases, when Jesus talked about Hell, He used the Greek word (Gehenna). Gehenna was short for *The Valley of Hinnom*. The Valley of Hinnom was, and is to the day, a physical place outside Jerusalem.

Today, that valley looks like this.

Show picture

Let me give you the history of this valley.

In the Old Testament, this valley was used as a place to worship a blood thirsty god by the name of Molech. Under King Ahaz and King Manasseh, people would gather and worship in this valley and offer new burn infants has human sacrifices to this god. They would actually burn their children on the altar.

You can read about this in 2 Kings 23L10, 2 Chronicles 28 and 2 Chronicles 33. As a matter of fact, in Leviticus 18:21… You shall not give your children as an offering to Molech...

Here's an image of what that might have looked like.

Show picture

When Jesus was teaching, the valley had taken a different purpose. It was used as the city dump. Fires burned day and night to consume the trash. The bodies of criminals were discarded there. The remains of bed animals were discarded there as well. Late into the night, wild animals would feed along the edges, tearing off pieces of flesh. In that valley, the fire never died.

So when Jesus spoke about Hell, He used the Greek word Gehenna or Valley of Hinnom because He was saying, "If you want to know what Hell is like, look over in that ravine. Take a good look at that valley."

But in when Jesus taught about Hell, it looked more like this.

Show picture

Jesus referred to Hell as a literal place and described it in graphic terms.

Now you might be thinking, "If God is a God of love and Hell is real, then God's not fair."

But my friend, you and I don't need fair; you and I need mercy!

The fairest place in the universe is Hell because everyone in Hell is getting what they deserve.

Heaven is the most unfair place in the universe because everyone there is getting what they don't deserve.

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Notice the word "strait" in that passage, it means narrow but not in size; but narrow because of all the obstacles that stands in the way.

When God hung the gate to Heaven, He hung it big and wide. It's a one-size-fits-all gate. It's big enough for the whole world to pass through. But standing between you and that big gate there are a million obstacles. Most people's lives are so cluttered by the obstacles that they can't even see the gate.

You know who the gate is don't you?

The gate is Jesus.

But most people are so consumed with life…

Stuff…

Their career…

Their failures…

The pain of their past…

That they can't see Jesus.

No one in Hell will be able to say to God, "You put me here."

And no one in Heaven will be able to say, "I put myself here."