

The Seven Saddest Sayings for Sinners

~Other Speakers M-R: John R. Rice:

The Bible deals with the most heart-moving themes that ever entered the mind of man; with the deepest woes of human misery and the highest heights of blessedness and ecstasy; with eternities, not time alone. It centers not on food and drink, nor houses and jobs, but on sin and salvation, Heaven and Hell, everlasting joy or sorrow.

The preacher of the Gospel has more wealth at his disposal than any other public speaker. No other speaker could deal with such themes of joy and promised blessedness, such peace and eternal glory. No other speaker deals with such themes as ought to move the human heart to sighs and tears.

How terrible are the woes pictured in the Bible for the unredeemed, for Christ-rejecting sinners!

With deep moving of heart I have searched through the Bible for the seven saddest sayings about sinners in all the sacred Scriptures. These Scriptures ought to move every Christian to tears and earnest effort to serve the Lord; ought to move the sinner to godly fear and earnest, tearful repentance; ought to move the sinner to seek today the forgiving mercy of God which he has so long rejected.

These are solemn words, tragic words about sinners which we find in the holy Book of God.

I. The Sinner Is Already Lost—John 3:36

In John 3:36 we find these sad words about the state of unconverted sinners:

"...he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The sinner is not going to be lost when he dies, not going to be lost after the judgment, but is lost now. The wrath of God is on him all the time.

This same verse says that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." One who has trusted Christ is already saved, has a new heart, a new life in Christ. Romans 5:11 says, "...we have now received the atonement." So those who have trusted in Christ for salvation and have been converted are already children of God, have already received the atonement. John 5:24 says that the believer "is passed from death unto life." But the unregenerate sinner already has the wrath of God abiding on him.

How does God feel about a sinner who has not trusted Christ? We know that God loves the whole world and gave His Son to die for sinners. But along with this love for all men there is a growing, burning anger against all who reject Christ. Psalm 7:11 says, "God is angry with the wicked every day."

Then those who are not saved are lost. They are lost now. They are under the wrath of God. Romans 9:22 says, "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction...?" Christ-rejecting sinners are under God's wrath, and He has already consented to their destruction because they are "vessels...fitted to destruction."

John 3:18 says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." One who has not trusted in Christ is already condemned. It is not said that he will be condemned when he dies or condemned at the judgment, but he is already condemned.

I went to see a man in the jail at Fort Worth, Texas who was already condemned to die in the electric chair within thirty days. He was brought out of solitary confinement so I could talk to him about his soul.

His face was pasty white. His body was thin. His transparent hand trembled like that of a man of eighty, though he was only twenty-two. He was condemned. The court had already tried him. It had already proved him guilty. It had already sentenced him to death. He knew that he was condemned.

All about us are people who are just as certainly condemned as that man, though they do not know it. They have not trusted in Christ, so they have already been found guilty by the court of Heaven. They have spurned the offers of pardon, ignored the plea to repent. God says they are condemned already.

This horrible thought, that unconverted, unrepentant men are already lost, already condemned, already under the wrath of God, is one of the most solemn, saddest taught in the whole Bible.

II. "Ye Will Not Come to Me, That Ye Might Have Life"—John 5:40

The fact that sinners do not come to Jesus is sad, but far worse is the fact taught in the Saviour's words in John 5:40. The tragedy is not that people DO not come; it is not that they CANNOT come; it is not that they do not KNOW HOW to come. No, it is that they WILL NOT come.

A wealth of sadness is in these words, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." What is it that stands between a sinner and salvation, the sinner and peace, forgiveness, a new heart, everlasting life and Heaven itself? It is simply his own wicked, stubborn will.

Someone has said, "The one thing you own is your will." Some dictator might be able to make you do what you did not want to do. By torture you might be compelled to tell secrets you never intended to repeat or to betray friends and loved ones you had vowed to protect forever. People might seize your property, take away your liberty, put out your eyes, amputate your limbs, or take away life itself; but no human power, no government, can control your will. You can still want what you want.

Persecution might make you betray your country, but could not make you hate your country. Persecution could make you say, "Heil, Hitler!" but could not make you love Hitler. Circumstances might make you eat black bread and cabbage soup, but they could not keep you from preferring sirloin steak and strawberry shortcake.

That realm of the soul where a man says "yes" or "no," "I love" or "I hate," "I will" or "I will not"—that is the last fortress of a man's soul.

With all the reverence of my soul, I say that a holy God will not batter down the door of the will and save a man who does not want to be saved.

Why do not people come to Christ? Because they do not want to come! Why do sinners not repent? Because they do not want to repent! Why do sinners not trust Christ for salvation? Because they do not want to trust Him!

These words of Jesus, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life," tell what is wrong with every atheist, agnostic or infidel. The trouble is not that they CANNOT believe, but that they WILL NOT believe. The trouble is not with the intellect, but with the heart, the will.

The truth was wonderfully illustrated with a great meeting which D. L. Moody and Sankey had in East London in 1883 or 1884.

One Monday evening was reserved for an address to atheists, skeptics and freethinkers. Atheists' clubs, led by Charles Bradlaugh, accepted the challenge and came five thousand strong to fill the building except room reserved for ministers and workers. The late Mr. George Soltau tells of that wonderful service in these words:

The service commenced earlier than usual. After the preliminary singing, Mr. Moody asked the men to choose their favorite hymns, which suggestion raised many a laugh, for atheists have no song or hymn.

The meeting got well underway. Mr. Moody spoke from "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges" (Deut. 32:31). He poured in a broadside of telling, touching incidents from his own experience of the deathbeds of Christians and atheists, and let the men be the judges as to who had the best foundation on which to rest faith and hope.

Reluctant tears were wrung from many an eye. The great mass of men, with the darkest, most determined defiance of God stamped upon their countenances, faced this running fire attacking them in their most vulnerable points; namely, their hearts and homes.

But when the sermon was ended, one felt inclined to think nothing had been accomplished, for it had not appealed to their intellects, or their reasoning faculties had convinced them of nothing.

At the close Mr. Moody said, "We will rise and sing 'Only Trust Him,' and while we do so, will the ushers open all the doors so that any man who wants to leave can do so; and after that we will have the usual inquiry meeting for those who desire to be led to the Saviour." I thought, All will stampede, and we shall only have an empty hall. But instead, the great mass of five thousand men rose, sang and sat down again—not one man vacating his seat!

"I Can't!" "I Won't!"

What next? Mr. Moody then said, "I will explain four words: receive, believe, trust, take HIM." A broad grin pervaded all that sea of faces. After a few words upon "receive," he made the appeal, "Who will receive Him? Just say, 'I will.'"

From the men standing round the edge of the hall came some fifty responses, but not one from the mass seated before him. One man growled, "I can't," to which Mr. Moody replied, "You have spoken the truth, my man; glad you spoke. Listen, and you will be able to say 'I can' before we are through."

Then he explained the word "believe" and made his second appeal: "Who will say, 'I will believe Him'?" Again some responded from the fringe of the crowd, till one big fellow, a leading club man, shouted, "I won't." Dear Mr. Moody, overcome with tenderness and compassion, burst into broken, tearful words, half sobs, "It is 'I will' or 'I won't' for every man in this hall tonight."

The Atheists Confounded

Then he suddenly turned the whole attention of the meeting to the story of the Prodigal Son, saying, "The battle is in the will, and only there. When the young man said, 'I will arise,' the battle was won, for he had yielded his will; and on that point all hangs tonight. Men, you have your champion there in the middle of the hall, the man who said, 'I won't.' I want every man here who believes that man is right to follow him and to rise and say, 'I won't.'" There was perfect silence and stillness; all held their breath, till as no man rose, Moody burst out, "Thank God, no man says, 'I won't.' Now, who'll say, 'I will'?"

In an instant the Holy Spirit seemed to have broken loose upon that great crowd of enemies of Jesus Christ, and five hundred men sprang to their feet, their faces raining down with tears, shouting, "I will, I will," till the whole atmosphere was changed and the battle was won.

Quickly the meeting was closed that personal work might begin. And from that night till the end of the week nearly two thousand men were swung out from the ranks of the foe into the army of the Lord, by the surrender of their wills. They heard His "rise and walk," and they followed Him.

The permanency of that work was well attested for years afterward, and the clubs never recovered their footing. God swept them away in His mercy and might by the Gospel. (From The Sword Book of Treasures)

Dear sinner who reads this, do not deceive yourself. Your trouble is not in your head, that you cannot believe; but in your heart, that you will not!

This truth needs to be pondered well, for it proves the depravity of the human heart. It proves that men are wicked sinners, alien from God, enemies of God by nature. If men were naturally good, then they would choose to come to Christ, choose to be forgiven, choose to be redeemed. Since they are wicked sinners by choice, they will not come to Jesus that they might have life.

How wicked the human heart that will not take mercy when it is offered, will not accept the salvation purchased at such a price—the blood of God's own Son!

Surely this is one of the saddest sayings in the Bible, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

III. Why People Are Not Saved: They Love Darkness Because of Their Evil Deeds—John 3:19,20

The moving complaint of the Lord Jesus against sinners, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life," is sad. But another Scripture tells us why sinners do not come to Christ, why they do not want the light. Jesus, in John 3:18, said, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." One who has not trusted Christ is condemned already.

Then the following verses take up this terrible condemnation that rests upon sinners and tell why they deserve no mercy and why they must be condemned. These show the awful moral guilt of Christ-rejecting sinners. Read these verses and see if they do not hold another of the saddest sayings:

"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."—John 3:19,20.

Does some sinner protest that he wants to do right and that there is no moral guilt in delaying his salvation?

Does some sinner pretend that there are good reasons, good motives back of his failure to trust Christ as Saviour?

Do not believe it! There is never a good reason for doing wrong. In this case, the Lord Himself opens the door of the human heart and lets us look within. Light has come into the world, He said. Jesus Himself is the Light of the world. But men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Those who do evil hate the light; that is, they hate Christ who is the Light, and they will not come to Him because their deeds are evil. They love their sins. They will not come to Christ lest their sins should be reproved.

Unsaved men do not always know why they reject Christ. You see, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). No man realizes how wicked he is unless the wickedness of his heart be revealed by the Holy Spirit of God.

Whether or not sinners know it, that is one ghastly and tragic reason why every Christ-rejecting sinner goes on without Christ and salvation. He will not come to Christ because he loves his sin. He does not want his sin reproved. So he hates Christ, the Light, and chooses the darkness of unbelief.

Thus a man chooses to have his mind clouded, chooses to go toward agnosticism or atheism rather than come to Christ and have his sins forgiven.

These words of Jesus prove the moral guilt of unbelief.

One may say that he does not come to Christ because he cannot give up some enslaving habit, some binding sin. But Christ did not say one should wait until he conquered habit or until he made his own heart white.

Thank God, Jesus Christ will accept the vilest sinner, the sinner who knows that he cannot reform himself, cannot break himself loose from the chains of habitual sin. No sinner need wait for victory over drink or lust or dope or over the power of sin in any other form before he comes to Jesus.

Jesus Christ will take the sinner just as he is and do for him all that he needs done, including not only forgiveness but cleansing.

Christ can save not only from the penalty of sin but from the power of sin; but He cannot save the sinner against his will. He cannot make a drunkard sober unless the drunkard wants to be sober. He cannot make the harlot pure unless the harlot longs to be pure. He cannot make the infidel into a believer unless the infidel wants to be a believer. The choice must rest with the sinner.

As long as a man loves his sin, holds onto his sin and hates the light that would expose it, he will not come to Christ, and Christ will not save him.

Last night I heard a successful businessman, greatly respected in a wide circle of prominent friends, tell how he came to Christ after forty-seven years in sin. He told how he said to God, "I am not coming signing any pledge to quit drink. I have signed them before, and that didn't work. I am not coming to You promising that I will never swear again. I have tried again and again to conquer that habit, and failed. Lord Jesus, I believe that You died for my sins, and I want You to do for all my habits and sins what I cannot do for myself."

He trusted Christ and since then has been used to win hundreds of souls one by one. There was a glad joy in his voice as he said publicly last night, "And since that time I have never taken a drink and have never sworn an oath!"

Christ will take a sinner who is covered with sin and save him, but the sinner must be willing for Christ to take away the sins and rebuke them and reprove them.

By the testimony of the man quoted above, I do not mean to indicate that God always instantly takes away a habit without effort. Sometimes He means for men to struggle and watch and pray and so have victory. But I do mean to say that it is not the fact of an enslaving habit or sin that keeps a man away from Christ. It is the wicked will of the sinner which makes him hold onto his sin and turn from the light and choose the darkness which makes it so God cannot save.

God can save the drunkard, the murderer, the whoremonger, the atheist instantly, if in his heart he hates his sins and turns to Christ, the Light. But God cannot save the purest woman or the most innocent child until each chooses to come to Christ.

How foolish are the ultradispensationalists who teach that repentance was necessary for Jews but not for Gentiles; it was fitting in the preaching of John the Baptist but not proper today! Such foolish talk springs from an utter misunderstanding of the unregenerate heart and of the Bible.

Everyone who is ever to be saved must face this innate love for sin and darkness, this natural antipathy to Christ and the light of the Gospel. And preachers everywhere should expose sin as the hateful, wicked thing it is, and urge men to repent, as did John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul, as well as Old Testament prophets.

What a sad fact is revealed in these words of Jesus that "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."

Oh, surely if any sinner wants to do right, he will turn to Christ at once for mercy!

IV. Such Love and Compassion Rejected—Matt. 23:37,38

We have already used three sad verses that talk about the tragedy of sinners who will not come to Christ. In John 3:36 Jesus said, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life." In John 5:40 Jesus said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." In John 3:20 Jesus said, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

Now we have another sad saying of Jesus lamenting that sinners would not come unto Him. In Matthew 23:37 we hear the sad words of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Can you imagine the scene? It was only two days before the Feast of the Passover when Jesus would be crucified. He had spent many of the days of His ministry in Jerusalem, the Holy City. How He loved this city of David, the city of the kings, the city of the prophets, the city of the Temple worship! Again and again He had tried to win people to love and trust Him. He knew all the prophets whom they had murdered, all the preachers whom they had stoned; yet He loved them and wanted them saved.

Consider this tenderhearted Saviour weeping over the city that will murder Him in two days! Consider why men hate such a good Saviour.

Did the Jews find Jesus austere and unapproachable? No, He said, "I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29). The harlot woman stooped to weep over His feet until her tears washed away the dust, and then she dried them with the hair of her head without rebuke.

Austere? Unapproachable? No. He cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene, the outcast. He took little children in His arms and blessed them. He took part in wedding feasts and Pharisees' suppers. He wept with Mary and Martha at the grave of Lazarus. No sinner ever has a right to say that Jesus is unapproachable, that He cares only for the rich, that He cannot be found by any humble heart that seeks Him.

Are, then, the demands of Jesus so difficult to fulfill? Is He a hard Master? Does He take away all pleasure and leave life bitter? No. He so well said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." What freedom every sinner has found when set free from Satan's bondage!

I have been a Christian since I was nine years old, and a preacher of the Gospel for many years. If I had a dozen sons, I would want each to be a preacher. Oh no! Jesus is not a hard Master. His way is not bitter. His yoke is not heavy and hard.

What is there wrong with Jesus that sinners will not have Him? Is He harsh and unforgiving? No. He received the traitor's kiss of Judas on His cheek and called him "friend"! On the cross He prayed for those who killed Him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Sinners who have rejected Him forty or fifty years often still find this pleading, small voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to their hearts. Jesus loves them and seeks them still.

Does Jesus offer enslavement? Is that why sinners reject Him? No. He cast out the legion of devils from the maniac of Gadara and set him free, clothed and in his right mind!

When a father brought his son, often cast into the fire by devils, Jesus cast out the devils and sent the lad home, well and sound, with his happy father.

The businessman who served Satan forty-seven years and now for ten happy years has been going about telling what wonderful things God has done for him, tells me that often as he travels over the country he passes a place where once he drank and swore with wicked men. His heart wells up in gratitude that he is no longer a slave and that he will never be driven to do those things anymore.

Does Jesus ask you to give Him too much? No. Instead He wants to give you life, peace, joy and a home in Heaven.

I think I know as many as twenty people who found life so barren that they planned suicide, but at the last moment let Jesus Christ come in to make them happy and set them free.

Every sinner should remember that it is a weeping Saviour whom you reject, a Saviour weeping over the sinner's lost soul. It is a compassionate Saviour whom you reject. How many times He would have drawn you to His heart! He knows that you are of a race of sinners, He knows every secret of your vile heart, yet He loves you and died for you.

Surely it is one of the saddest sayings in the Bible that the people over whom Christ yearns and broods, the people He would so often have hugged to His bosom in forgiveness and peace, would not come. Jesus said, "How often would I...and ye would not!"

The same teaching is given in Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Christ stands at the door and knocks, but you ignore Him and go to Hell. Christ stands at the door and knocks and pleads, but you bar the door and continue in a sin that damns you.

How sad it is that Christ says, "How often would I...and ye would not!"

V. Religious, Cheerful, Confident, but Forever Lost!—Matt. 7:22,23

One of the saddest passages in the Bible for sinners is in Matthew 7:22,23, where Jesus tells of many who have forms of religion and go merrily on to Hell, thinking they are en route to Heaven:

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Every sensible man should weep to see a sinner who knew all the facts, knew he was lost and still chose to remain lost. But that is not so tragic as the case of multiplied thousands who are confident they are going to Heaven, though they have never personally trusted Christ for salvation, and go unwarned and unsuspecting to eternal torment.

If a man went weeping and fearfully, yet determinedly, to Hell, that would be sad. Then how much sadder is it when one lies down in death, depending on baptism or on confirmation or on good deeds, and in horror wakes up in Hell!

In the stockyards at Fort Worth, Texas, a packing company had a goat named Judas. He deserved the name, for when he was turned in with each new flock of frightened sheep, he confidently led them through a passage into the slaughterhouse. The unsuspecting sheep followed the goat. Always the goat was spared and sent back to lead others to their doom.

Those sheep, blindly following their new friend, Judas, hoping again to find the pasture or meadow, are not nearly so pitiful as sinners who go on to Hell right merrily, feeling confident that with holy water put upon their heads they cannot be lost, or with the catechism and confirmation over, they surely are saved, or with confession made to the priest and penance done, the church will surely see to their salvation!

Sad, sad it is when religious people wake up in Hell because they would not come to Christ and personally trust Him for salvation.

VI. Men—Made in the Image of God—Cast Into Fire Prepared for Demons!—Matt. 25:41

Another of the saddest sayings in the whole Word of God is that which fell from the mouth of the Lord Himself,

in Matthew 25:41. Jesus tells of His future return to the earth when He will set up His kingdom at Jerusalem and reign from David's throne. Then the people of the earth will be gathered before Him for judgment.

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

There are many striking things about this tragic saying of Jesus.

First, it is remarkable that it is Jesus who will send sinners to Hell. We preachers sometimes say to a sinner, "It is your own fault. You send yourself to Hell. You cannot blame Christ for it." That is essentially true, yet we must remember that the tenderhearted Jesus Himself who died to save sinners will also be the Judge who will personally condemn every Christ-rejecting sinner and send him to the flames. This word is all the sadder because it must fall from the mouth of the Lord.

When the Lord condemns a man to Hell, who is there who can intervene? Who is there to make atonement? Who is there to be an advocate, a mediator? Once Jesus said, "Come"; now to those who would not come, He says, "Depart!"

Another tragic thought in this saying of Jesus is that the unsaved are cursed. Jesus says He will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed." In John 3:18 Jesus says that the sinner is condemned already. In John 3:36 He says that the wrath of God abides daily on the sinner. Here Jesus says that the unconverted sinner is cursed!

Mother, is your accountable child unconverted? Then you must be alarmed, for that child is under a curse. You should act more quickly than you would if you knew he was stricken down with polio or leprosy. Sinners are cursed of God.

Sometimes a Christian young woman falls in love with an unsaved young man. She feels that he is essentially good, and she loves him so dearly and wishes to marry him. Don't do it! The curse of God is on him if he is not saved.

How well Paul knew this great truth—that every lost sinner is accursed—for in I Corinthians 16:22 he says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema..."—that is, let him be accursed.

It is as if Paul said in earnest prayer to God, "Lord, if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be damned to Hell forever." For that is what does happen to Christ-rejecting sinners. Christ Himself will have to turn sadly to unconverted sinners and say, "Depart from me, ye cursed."

The sadness of the verse grows deeper, for Jesus said, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Some ultradispensational Bible teacher would have us believe that there will be no lake of fire until after the last judgment; but here we see that the fire is already prepared. It is the same fire mentioned by the Lord when He told of the rich man who fared sumptuously every day until he died and woke up tormented in flames and Hell.

There seems to be a deep pathos in the thought that even when Jesus sends cursed Christ-rejecters to Hell, He tells them, "I never meant it for you! You were made in the image of God! It was intended that you should be saved, that you should be forgiven, regenerated! Hell was intended for Satan and his demons!"

How sad that men, made in the image of God, reject Christ and will not be saved. How sad that men turn down the offers of mercy and will not go to the Father's house of many mansions! They were told, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," but they would not drink.

God loved the whole world—those who will never be saved as well as those who would. "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2).

It is a tragedy unspeakable for men who were intended for Heaven to land in the pit of Hell, in the fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.

Every man and woman and child who goes to Hell will know that it was not intended for him, and that he could have escaped had he turned to Jesus for mercy and pardon.

Surely these words are among the saddest that Jesus ever spoke, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." In the same chapter, in verse 46, we are told, "And these shall go

away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

VII. The Eternal Burning—Rev. 14:10,11

Now we feel compelled to mention another tragic Scripture which naturally follows:

"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."—Rev. 14:10,11.

The immediate context shows that God is speaking of Christ-rejecting sinners who, in the Great Tribulation time, side in with the Antichrist.

We are told that everyone who takes the mark of the Beast is past all pardon. Those who trusted Christ and are saved will refuse to take the mark of the Antichrist. We are not here interested in the Antichrist, for those who reject Christ in the future Great Tribulation will go to the same Hell as all other Christ-rejecting sinners. There is no special, hand-tailored Hell for a few. This is the doom of every sinner who dies without Christ.

First, it is obvious by this tragic Scripture that the wrath of God at last will put a sinner in the torments of Hell. Oh, flee from the wrath of God! Seek God's mercy and escape His wrath. The wrath of God burns now on all Christ-rejecting sinners and will at last be poured out like wine unmixed into the cup of God's holy indignation against sinners! The poor lost sinner "shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

There are wicked people, infidels in bishops' robes, ministers of Satan who appear as angels of light who say that the God of the Old Testament was a dirty bully, that any God who would punish sin is their devil.

Such blasphemers, often from pulpits, pour out their scorn on the Psalms that threaten judgment on sinners. They call all preaching about Hell and judgment "negative preaching." They hate the God of judgment. But He is the God of the Bible. The God of love is the God of wrath. The God of mercy is the God of judgment. The Saviour who said, "In my Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you," is the Saviour who will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

God's wrath has long been mixed with mercy. But one day it will be poured out into the cup of His indignation without any mixture, without any palliation, without any dilution.

"Tormented with fire and brimstone"? Yes. Do not ask me how sinners escape annihilation in the torment of eternal fire.

I do not understand how the three Hebrew children walked in the fiery furnace and had no smell of smoke on their garments. I cannot ride in a passenger train where others smoke without having the smell in my clothes.

I do not understand how these Hebrew children in the fire had not a hair singed but only their bonds were burned.

It seems quite clear God can make fire do anything He wants it to do. God can make fire torment the damned in Hell without bodies being oxidized and turned to ashes and without the souls ceasing to be. I do not understand it, but where God said fire so many, many times in talking about Hell, dare I say less?

This passage is so terrible that I wonder men can eat and sleep when they read it. Do you realize that people are tormented day and night in Hell? Do you realize that one man, about whom Jesus told, for two thousand years or more has been begging for just a drop of water to cool his tongue and has found none?

I do not pretend to know all the torment in Hell. But this I know: sin brings torment, and those in Hell will still be sinners. I know that sin brings disease and pain to bodies. I know that sin brings torment to the conscience. I know that sin brings the scourge of lost opportunities, and deep will be the lament of soul for every man and woman in Hell who has a memory. But I would be less than honest as a preacher of the Gospel if I did not remind every reader that there is unceasing torment for soul and body in Hell.

There is a sadder note yet in these verses. I do not pretend to understand it, but the Scripture plainly declares that those tormented in Hell will be "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

I do not think for a moment that Christ will gloat over their sufferings, nor will angels. It must mean that Hell is not left to itself. Those in Hell are not forgotten. They suffer on, but it is the deliberate decree of God who knows their continuing sin, who knows their ever-burning rebellion against Him.

After a man has been in Hell for a million years, the Lord Jesus and the holy angels will be there to see that there is not an ounce of pain more than is deserved, that each sinner gets not one hair's breadth of punishment less than is right.

It may mean too that those in Hell will be forever reminded of the joy they might have had, of the mercy which was offered freely, and of the glorious happiness across the eternal gulf separating them from Heaven. I do not understand all of this, but it is sad with an infinite sadness of eternal damnation.

Yet another word we see in this sad saying. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night..."

How real God makes Hell! It is like some eternal concentration camp where restless, tormented prisoners mark upon the walls of their cells the passing days and nights and long for the release that never comes.

The smoke of torment ascends up forever and ever—the torment continues. The torment of the day comes, and those there will cry, "Oh, that it were night!" And the night of tormenting conscience, the memory of lost opportunities, the pain of present sin, the shame of present punishment will make the night as the day.

One of the blessed things we have in Jesus is rest: "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." But there is no rest for the wicked in Hell, no rest day nor night.

This is the Word of God. We are not to argue with it. Does it seem unreasonable? Then your reason is not sanctified by a surrendered will and the light of the Holy Spirit.

Whether this God whose sayings we have quoted is the God you would like to have or not, He is the God you must meet. You may love Him or hate Him, but you must deal with this God who tells us that the wicked will be tormented in Hell forever!

Conclusion: Flee From Those Woes!

And now my message is done. It has been a heavy burden to preach. Any man must be stirred, moved, burdened by the awful doom of the wicked. But, dear sinner, if you let these words slip, if you are not moved to heed these warnings, how hard must be your heart, how blind must be your spiritual sight!

Oh, thank God that all these sad sayings are counterbalanced by precious promises! One who has not trusted Christ shall not see life, and the wrath of God abides on him; but the same verse says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). You may trust Christ today and have life instead of the wrath of God.

Jesus said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." So it was with those to whom Jesus spake. So it is with many today. But you may come. Oh, I hope you will! Some would not come because their deeds were evil, and they hated the light. But if you will turn your heart away from your sins and come to Jesus, your sins will be forgiven in a moment, and Christ, the Light of the world, will make your whole heart glad.

It is true that Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and His pleadings were scorned. He said, "How often would Iâ...and ye would not!" But you can say, "I will." "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," is the blessed promise of Revelation 22:17.

It is true that those who depend on baptism, on church membership, on confirmation, on good deeds are deceived. They are religious, perhaps, but lost. But you may depend upon Christ Himself, depend upon the blood He shed for you and risk His promises. Other dependencies fail, but He is sure! Take Him today and be saved.

Two of the sad sayings mentioned above referred to Hell. But the Bible tells also about Heaven, and God wants you there. You need not go to Hell. Today you may turn to Jesus and trust Him and be saved. Will you do it?

Now I appeal to your will. I appeal to your conscience. I appeal to your good sense. Will you today turn from your sins? Will you today give up your will to Christ? Will you here and now decide this question and accept Christ as your Saviour, depending on Him for forgiveness? If you will, then today the peace of God will come

The Seven Saddest Sayings for Sinners

into your heart, your sins will all be forgiven, and I will meet you in Heaven.