

## FOREVER - NO REST, NO CHANGE, NO HOPE

All criminals long and hope for release someday, if only by death, but Hell is forever and ever while eternity rolls her ceaseless ages on. There *their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched* (Mark 9:48), and *the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever, and they have no rest day and night* (Revelation 14:11). No rest "forever and forever" is a horrible thought, since driving all night even one night can make no rest an earthly agony. "Forever and ever" literally means "unto the ages made up of ages." "Immortal" means "deathless" and "eternal" means "endless." All these expressions fail to fully convey the endless, restless, changeless, and hopeless lostness of a never-dying soul in a never-ending Hell. Being lost means forever.

## ALL WHO ARE NOT SAVED ARE THE LOST

The good news is to be preached to every creature in all the world so that believers can be baptized and be saved, but *he that believeth not shall be damned* (Mark 16:15, 16). The Lord Jesus will take vengeance upon those who *know not God and obey not the gospel* (2 Thessalonians 1:8). The fallen Christian who once escaped, but was again overtaken by the world, will suffer a *latter end worse than the first* (2 Peter 2:20—22). The unfaithful and unprofitable servant will be *cast into outer darkness* (Matthew 25:30). Those who love not God's truth will *believe a lie and be damned* (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12). Any man preaching another gospel will be *accursed* (Galatians 1:8, 9). Being lost is not being saved. It automatically results from failure to be forgiven. Won't you today accept God's mercy, obey Christ's gospel, and be faithful unto death? Do not find out too late what it means to be lost!

### WHICH?

LOST . . . . .	FOUND
SORROW . . . . .	JOY
SEPARATED . . . . .	BACK HOME
UNHOLY . . . . .	FORGIVEN
SINS UPON YOU . . . . .	SINS UPON CHRIST
TORMENTED . . . . .	COMFORTED
RAISED TO DAMNATION . . . . .	RAISED TO LIFE
HELL . . . . .	HEAVEN
OUTER DARKNESS . . . . .	IN GOD'S LIGHT
WITH DEMONS, CRIMINALS . . . . .	WITH THE REDEEMED
NO REST, NO HOPE . . . . .	ETERNAL REST, PEACE

CHOOSE NOW!

# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LOST

Were you ever lost as a child? Were you separated from your parents in a large crowd? Or were you terrified and alone in strange woods or in the darkness of night? If so, you learned well what the word "lost" means. It calls back to you the hopeless and helpless feelings of futility and despondency. It recalls your aloneness, helplessness, and fear. Being lost from God is like that.

## NOT BEING FOUND

In Luke 15:3—24 Jesus told three stories which pictured God as sad and distressed over lost sinners. Verses 3—7 liken God to a shepherd of a hundred sheep who loses one and leaves the ninety-nine so as to go after the lost one until he finds it. When he finds it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing, and then he calls his friends saying, *Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost*. Verse 7 concludes that one sinner who repents causes more rejoicing in heaven than ninety-nine persons who are not lost from God. Being lost from God means not being found by God.

## NOT MAKING GOD HAPPY

Jesus' second story in verses 8—10 describes God as a woman with ten coins who loses one. She lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and seeks diligently until she finds it. God is frustrated and worried over one lost sinner, just as you perhaps have been when you could not be happy until you found something valuable you had lost. But upon finding the coin, the woman calls her friends and neighbors and says, *Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost*. Even so, Jesus explains, there is joy in the presence of the angels (around God's throne) over one sinner who repents. Being lost and not found means not making God rejoice.

## NOT COMING HOME TO GOD

The third story (verses 11—24) of God's feelings about lost sinners is the story of a lost boy. He had a good father and a good home, but — boy-like — he chose to journey into a far country and waste his money in sin. When he was hungry and destitute, he *came to himself* and thought about home and his father's love. This made him arise and go to his father to confess his sin and beg for mercy. But the father saw him *while he was yet afar off* and ran and hugged and kissed the unworthy son who had come home. He put on him the best robe, and shoes, and a ring, and killed a fatted calf to make merry over a beloved and penitent son who had been lost but was now found. Being lost from God means not coming home to a loving Father.

### **SEPARATING ONESELF BY SIN FROM A HOLY GOD**

Man chooses to sin and thereby separates himself from God's holiness. Isaiah 59:2 says that sin separates man from God. Romans 3:23 says that all men have sinned and come short of God's glory. Romans 1:18 says that God's anger is revealed from heaven against all of man's ungodliness and unrighteousness. Hebrews 2:2 shows that every sin must receive its proper punishment. Because God's holy nature cannot stand sin, He withdraws Himself from sinful man. Because God's just nature must withdraw from every sin, man breaks his own fellowship from a holy and sin-hating God. Being lost means separating oneself from God's holiness by choosing to sin.

### **REJECTING CHRIST'S DEATH IN MY PLACE**

Because God loves us, Christ suffered sin's penalty in man's place. He was separated from God and endured shame and death as a substitute sacrifice and sin-offering in our place. Like the innocent scapegoat of Leviticus 16 carried upon himself and carried away from the guilty people their just punishment, so Jesus innocently bore our guilty sins in His body on the cross (I Peter 2:24). And because He has already been punished for our sins, we do not ourselves have to be. Because of the cross, guilty sinners can be forgiven and thus have their togetherness restored with a holy God. But to refuse to accept this forgiveness is to reject the loving mercy of God and substitutionary death of Jesus and to be lost.

### **BEING TORMENTED IN HADES**

In Luke 16 Jesus told of a rich man who lived luxuriously in the finest clothing and eating the most sumptuous foods every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, who was full of sores which the dogs licked, and who wanted only the crumbs falling from the rich man's table. But when both men died, their roles were remarkably reversed. Lazarus was carried by the angels to the comfort of fellowship with Abraham's spirit, while the rich man was separated from Abraham and Lazarus by a great gulf and begged his ancestor Abraham to send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue from the anguish of the flames of his torment. But Abraham reminded him that his life of wasteful and selfish luxury and Lazarus' life of unjust suffering were now being justly reversed. The rich man then begged that Lazarus be sent to warn his five brothers not to come to his place of torment. But Abraham replied that his brothers had the warnings of the Scriptures of Moses and the prophets and would not be persuaded by Lazarus returning from the dead, if they would not hear their Old Testament Scriptures. Being lost in Hades is entering the unseen place of suffering spirits departed from their bodies by death.

### **BEING RAISED FROM THE DEAD FOR JUDGMENT**

Jesus said in John 5:28, 29 that a resurrection hour would come when all in the tombs would hear His voice and come forth either to a resurrection to life or a resurrection to judgment. This resurrection of all bodies to rejoin their disembodied spirits would be to bring every person before the absolute justice of the Judge of all the earth. Knowing God's terrible and inevitable day of reckoning caused Paul to beg men to prepare (2 Corinthians 5:10, 11). Hebrews 10:31 says, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Acts 17:30, 31 says that all men everywhere must repent, because God has appointed a day when Jesus will judge the world in righteousness, and all men are accountable because of the assurance given them by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead as proof in their world. Being lost means being raised to be judged in absolute justice by a Savior who died for all and was raised to convince all that every unforgiven sin must be punished. Being lost is being raised to face the judgment of sin. .

### **A HELL OF FIRE, A LAKE OF BRIMSTONE**

Because the world to come must be compared with physical terms which we can presently understand in this world, Jesus chose the word "Gehenna" (Valley of Hinnom) to describe eternal lostness. This abhorred word recalled to Jewish thinking two repulsive concepts connected with this valley near Jerusalem. One was the pagan worship of Moloch where children were burned in sacrifice to this god. The other was the continual burning of rubbish and carcasses in this valley which made it a place of ever-burning desolation. These concepts inherent to a Jew's thinking carried by the original word for Hell are deliberately used by Jesus to warn us to fear the one who can *destroy both body and soul in Hell* (Matthew 10:28). Revelation 19:20 describes the punishment of being *cast alive into the lake that burns with brimstone (sulphur)*. A lake calls up the fear of drowning or suffocation in water. Burning sulphur calls up its suffocating stench and weird blue glow. Being cast alive calls up the lingering, yet endless, ongoing suffering and never-ending despair. Being lost is burning in a Hell of fire and drowning in a lake of brimstone.

### **THE OUTER DARKNESS OF SEPARATION FROM GOD**

Because *God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all* (I John 1:5), eternal lostness is called *outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth* (Matthew 25:30). Because darkness symbolizes the fear and despair of aloneness from God, and because weeping and gnashing of teeth represent ultimate sorrow and pain, being lost is pictured as a condition where there is no good, no God, no right, and no light. Since God's light is the source of all good and all right, outer darkness is the final sorrow and horror of eternal separation from God. It is called in Revelation 21:8 *the second death*, because it is the eternal separation (which death means) chosen by sinful rebellion against God's love and the inevitable certainty that God cannot co-exist with sin. Being lost is the darkness of eternal separation from God.

### **ETERNAL TOGETHERNESS WITH DEMONS**

Who will be there makes Hell a place to be avoided at all costs. It was prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41), but it is populated by hypocrites (Matthew 25:51), with whom Jesus says all who are lost will be associated. The angels who sinned will be there (2 Peter 2:4), so will the Beast (Roman emperor), and False Prophet (the emperor's priest) (Revelation 20:10). Those fearful of the Beast, the unbelieving, the abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars will have their part there (Revelation 21:8). Think of eternity with all mass murderers like Hitler, Stalin, and Mengele, and with all the horrible sex-fiends, sorcerers, and liars of all the ages. Being lost is eternal togetherness with all of earth's criminals, henchmen, rogues, and perverts.