

Francis Chan - Excerpts from *Erasing Hell*

What causes my heart to ache right now as I'm writing this is that my life shows little evidence that I actually believe this. Every time my thoughts wander to the future of unbelievers, I quickly brush them aside so they don't ruin my day. But there is a reality here that I can't ignore. Even as the conversations of people around me fill my ears, the truth of Scripture penetrates my heart with sobering statements about their destinies.

But the New Testament writers didn't have the same allergic reaction to hell as I do. Perhaps they had a view of God that is much bigger than mine. A view of God that takes Him at His word and doesn't try to make Him fit our own moral standards and human sentimentality. A view of God that believes what He says, even when it doesn't make perfect sense to us.

Matthew 7 & Matthew 25

How will Jesus respond to your laundry list of Christian activities—your Easter services, tithe, Bible studies, church potlucks, and summer-camp conversions? Are you sure you're on the right side? What evidence do you have that you know Jesus? Please understand my heart. I believe I am asking these questions for the same reason that Jesus gives the warning. It's the most loving thing I can do! "Many" will go to hell even though they thought they'd waltz into paradise. Jesus will say, "I never knew you; depart from me" (Matt. 7:23).

Revelation

The most terrifying images of hell occur, as we have seen, in the book of Revelation. But let's remember the context in which John writes this book. This isn't an evangelistic tract written for unbelievers—the hell passages here weren't designed to make converts and scare people into the kingdom. They were designed to warn believers to keep the faith in the midst of adversity. In fact, the descriptions of hell in Revelation 14 and 20—21 were first written with the seven churches of Revelation 2—3 in mind. In these churches, there were those who had left their first love (Rev. 2:4), followed the heresy of false teachers (v. 20), and become complacent and "lukewarm" because of the earthly wealth they hoarded (3:15–17). It is to these types of people—people who confess Jesus with their lips but deny Him by their actions—that God reserves the most scathing descriptions of hellfire and brimstone.

End Notes

Let's not miss the very purpose for these lively warnings. God wants us to do more than intellectually agree with the words of Scripture: He wants us to live in light of them. Like the ER doctor who shocks the dead back to life, belief in hell should rescue our complacent hearts from the suffocating grip of passivity. God, help me overcome my selfishness. I want to love the way You asked me to. I don't want to say another insulting word to or about another person, not even jokingly. I want to shock my enemies with Christian love. I want to joyfully sacrifice for the poor, and to see You when I see them. I don't want to fit in anymore. Holy Spirit, save me. Set me apart. Make me worthy.

Here are the references for the individual words:

"death" or "die" (Greek: apothnesko, thanatos);
Rom. 1:32; 5:12, 14, 15, 17, 21; 6:16, 21, 23; 7:5,
9, 10, 11, 13; 8:2, 6, 13; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22; 2 Cor.
2:16; 3:6, 7; 7:10; Eph. 2:1);

"perish," "destroy," "destruction"

(Greek: apollymi, apoleia, olethros, phthora);
Rom. 2:12; 9:22; 14:15, 20; 1 Cor. 1:18; 15:18; 2
Cor. 2:15; 4:3; Gal. 6:8; Phil. 1:28; 3:19; 1
Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2:10; 1 Tim. 6:9;

"wrath" (Greek: orge, thymos);

Rom. 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 5:9; 9:22; Eph. 2:3; 5:6;
Col. 3:6; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:16; 5:9;

"condemn," "condemnation," or "judge"

(Greek: several words with the root krin-);
Rom. 2:1, 2, 3, 5, 12; 3:7, 8; 5:16, 18; 8:1; 1
Cor. 11:32; 2 Cor. 3:9; 2 Thess. 2:12; 1 Tim. 5:24;

"curse," "cursed" (Greek: anathema, katara);

Rom. 9:3; Gal. 1:8, 9; 3:10, 13; 1 Cor. 12:3;
16:22);

"punish" (Greek: ekdikos, ekdikesis, dike);

1 Thess. 4:6; 2 Thess. 1:8-9.

Francis Chan on writing *Erasing Hell*

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/julyweb-only/francis-chan-hell.html>

Am I sure of what I believe? Let me go back and study. Several times in the middle of the night I couldn't even sleep. I really believe the Lord wanted me to do this, but there is a wrestling on that point because I thought, "Gosh, that's just not me. That's not what I'm comfortable with. I really don't think I'll enjoy this at all. I'm not looking forward to all the backlash and everything else."

Francis Chan Destroys Rob Bell's Claim That There Is No Hell

Rob Bell's, *Love Wins*—

In *Love Wins*, Rob Bell questioned traditional Christian ideas regarding heaven and hell, insisting that hell was not a literal place. Francis Chan and Preston Sprinkle disagree, defending Christian orthodoxy. Learn the truth about heaven and hell in this video.

<https://www.charismamag.com/video/33506-francis-chan-destroys-rob-bell-s-claim-that-there-is-no-hell>

Perhaps, then, it is important to note that some rabbis take a very different view, describing Gehenna as the place of cleansing fire endured for a twelve-month period. During this time of refinement, sins were purged away, at which point one rejoined the company of the righteous. Not being myself an expert on these matters, it does seem reasonable to imagine that one might persuasively argue both perspectives, as is the case on most historical-critical matters in theology.

Ministry Matters

Comparing Bell and Chan on Hell

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/1837/comparing-bell-and-chan-on-hell>

Francis Chan on Heaven or Hell

<https://youtu.be/Z8zluOaMKGA>

Billy Graham, on Hell

“As a Christian and a preacher of the Gospel, I am always grieved to have to interrupt a marvelous picture, such as eternal life in Heaven, to talk about another eternal place that Jesus calls Hell,” Graham writes. “It has no similarities to what is typically called home, nor is Hell a resting place, a holding place, or a graveyard. Hell is a burning inferno.”

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/6358/billy-graham-warns-of-fire-and-brimstone-in-final-book>

Michael Hamilton, chair of the history department of evangelical Seattle Pacific University, said Graham spoke often of “the hell of the contemporary state of the world and the hell of the chaotic personal life. Those are the two hells that are really dominant through most of his ministry, though in the earlier years he talked more about an actual Bible hell.”

But Franklin Graham said of his father: “He’s always pictured hell as what the Bible teaches.”

In a chapter titled “Forever Separated and Forever United,” Billy Graham emphasizes his belief that individuals can choose to avoid what the Scripture describes as “unending death in a lake of fire and brimstone that burns forever.”

“I can say with certainty that if there is no literal fire in Hell, then God is using symbolic language to indicate something far worse,” he writes. “Just as there are no words to adequately describe the grand beauty of Heaven, we cannot begin to imagine just how horrible the place called Hell is.”

HELL

“You may be thinking, ‘Billy surely you do not believe all of this Hellfire and brimstone!’ My dear friends, it is not what I say that counts; it is what the Word of God says.”

“The worst kind of death is described in Scripture — unending death in a lake of fire and brimstone that burns forever. Just as we cannot fathom the wonder of living forever in glory, we cannot possibly comprehend the alternative.”

“Every person who rejects Christ and His atoning work will be cast into this horrible pit of despair. Worse will be to remember that it was by choice — that God called you to salvation but you rejected His wonderful gift. God does not send unrepentant souls into the pit of darkness; those souls choose their destiny. You’ve heard the saying, ‘They aren’t living; they are just existing!’ There will be ‘no purposeful living’ in Hell, just an existence beyond all misery.”

“You may wonder what Hell is really like. Don’t look to comedians for answers. The Bible tells you the truth. Hell is a place of sorrow and unrest, a place of wailing and a furnace of fire; a place of torment, a place of outer darkness, a place where people scream for mercy; a place of everlasting punishment.”