

“Harder Questions” Matthew 11:20-24

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Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. ²¹“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.” Matthew 11:20-24 (English Standard Version)

Question #1: “If God is so loving, why are Hades and Judgment Day a part of His vocabulary?”

The Major Turning Points of the Biblical Story

- **Creation** (See Genesis 1-2)

“Sandwiched as it is between divine declarations of creation’s goodness, this calling suggests that familial, social, political and economic activities are part of God’s good intentions for the world.” (Michael Allen)

- **Fall** (See Genesis 3 and Romans 5:12-17)

- **Redemption** and Initial Restoration
 - First: Jesus endured the same temptations as Adam and Eve did, but demonstrated perfect obedience.

 - Second: On the cross, Christ willingly accepted the blame that Adam and Eve never wanted to accept.

For our sake he made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

- Third: Christ transferred back to Adam (and to us) blessing, not accusation.

In him [Jesus] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, . . . Ephesians 1:7 (ESV)

- Final Redemption and Restoration

But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:13 (ESV)

He [Jesus] will come with his mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.

2 Thessalonians 1:7b-9 (New Living Translation)

“There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in Hell choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it.”
(From *The Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis)

Question #2: “What is repentance and why is it so necessary in my relationship with Jesus?”

Repentance: A heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.

Question #3: “Why is the lack of repentance on some people’s part worse in Jesus’ eyes than lack of repentance on other people’s part?”