

Where There Is Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

Matthew 22:1-14

Pastor Peter Hiatt

March 13, 2005

A movie clip is shown from Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey. Bill and Ted are shown falling into hell. After a long fall, they land in hell. They look around and both say, "No way."

Ted: "That's not what I expected this place to look like at all."

Bill: "Yeah. We got totally lied to by our album covers."

Next scene: Bill and Ted talk to Beelzebub.

Ted: "How's it going, Beelzebub?"

Bill: "So, uh, okay. Can we go now?"

Beelzebub: "You may go."

Bill: "Whoa. Thanks, dude."

Ted: "You know, you gotta bad rap. But you're actually an okay dude."

As soon as Ted tells Beelzebub he's an okay dude, the floor opens, and Bill and Ted are dropped into a lower level.

Beelzebub: "Choose your eternity."

Ted: "Choose your own! You #@!X"

Beelzebub sends Ted flying backward into a wall.

Bill: "You ugly, red, source of all evil..."

Beelzebub sends Bill flying backward into the same wall.

Their worst nightmares and fears start chasing them from every direction.

Ted and Bill run from the evil and shout to each other...

Ted: "Dude!"

Bill: "What?"

Ted: "Hell sucks!"

Bill: "Definitely!"

Bill: "Ted, there's only one way out of here, man."

Ted: "You're right, dude. We gotta play the reaper!"

Well, Bill and Ted get out of hell by beating the grim reaper in a game of battleship. There are some theological inaccuracies, but the movie does portray a rather Biblical view of hell.

- That it's like a deep pit.
- That it's not fun, and so our album covers have lied to us.
- It's the realm of the dead cut off from life and light with no truth and no way out.
- It's somehow the dominion of Satan and his demons.

In the movie, it's something of a joke, and we like to keep it a joke or at a distance, but not real.

Well, in scripture hell is real, like Satan is real.

Hell is real, but not the way heaven is real.

Hell is like the presence of an absence, while heaven is reality in itself.

Hell is a mind, heart, soul collapsed upon itself in darkness, while heaven is all things in the light of Christ.

So hell is real,
but not the way heaven is real...
like Satan is real,
but not the way Jesus is real.

Satan is real the way a lie is real,
like the absence of the truth is real...
the way darkness is real,
like the absence of light is real...
the way death is real,
like the absence of life is real.

Satan is our real enemy and
the real presence of an absence.
And hell is the dominion of that present absence...
the dominion of death, darkness, and lies.

Well, as if that's not confusing enough, the English word "hell" has been used to translate two very different words and two very different concepts: Gehenna and Hades, fire and darkness.

Hades and darkness are like an unspeakable absence
The fire of Gehenna is like an unspeakable presence.

At the end of the Revelation, death and Hades get thrown into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone. That is, death, darkness, and lies get thrown into life, light, and truth.

In the Old Testament (Isaiah 30:33), the breath of God like a stream of brimstone ignites the fires of tophet (that is, Gehenna). In Greek the word for “brimstone” is “theion,” also translated “divine being.” So death and Hades get thrown into “the sea of fire that burns with divine being.”

Could there be a worse fate for death, darkness, and lies than to be forever immersed in life, light, and truth? Our Lord is life, light, and truth. And our God is a consuming fire.

Well, when I speak of hell today, I’m speaking of Hades, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word “sheol.”

The Old Testament viewed sheol as the realm of the dead, where the dead are kept until judgment. (At the judgment in the Revelation, death and Hades give up their dead.) It’s the realm of the dead, yet in the Old Testament, sheol begins here.

- The Psalmist talks of how the pains of Hell, sheol, have grabbed hold of him.
- In Psalm 88, the Psalmist cries that God has placed him in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Yet obviously, he’s not medically dead for he’s still writing. He asks these questions,

“Will you show your wonders to the dead?
Shall the dead arise and praise thee?
Shall thy lovingkindness [hesed] be declared
in the grave?”

Or thy faithfulness in destruction?
 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?
 Or thy righteousness in the land of
 forgetfulness?"

Righteousness... scripture pictures
 righteousness as a robe we must put
 on.

Well, my point is that in the Old Testament, sheol
 begins here and extends into the afterlife. Lewis writes,

It begins with a grumbling mood, and
 yourself still distinct from it; perhaps
 criticising it. And yourself, in a dark hour,
 may will that mood, embrace it. Ye can
 repent and come out of it again. But there
 may come a day when you can do that no
 longer. Then there will be no *you* left to
 criticise the mood, nor even to enjoy it, but
 just the grumble itself going on forever like
 a machine.

Well, I don't know how accurate that is, yet it's
 clear that just as the kingdom of heaven is at hand, in some
 way, the kingdom of hell—Hades, sheol—is at hand. Well,
 whether you're talking about hell on earth or hell under the
 earth, sheol begins here and extends into the afterlife,
 the realm of death, darkness, and lies cut off from
 life, light, and truth.

Death, darkness, and lies... in other words, sin.

Death, darkness, and lies where men weep and
 gnash their teeth.

In Matthew 8:11, Jesus says,

I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

Did you get that? There are sons of the kingdom in the outer darkness.

In the Psalms, even King David, the man after God's own heart writes that his soul had been in the lowest hell, sheol, (Psalm 86:13).

Well, in this realm or the next, Hades, hell, is a terrifying place!

As Biblical Christians, we can't deny its existence.

Yet we do make it as ethereal, theoretical, and distant as possible. We put it solely in the next world and deny its existence in our world.

This week, Time magazine reported that 1.1 billion people in our world live on less than a dollar a day. 20,000 people will die today due to poverty. I'm not saying poverty is the same as hell. However, I bet if you had to live on less than a dollar a day, there'd be some weeping and gnashing of teeth. We don't like those statistics, and already your mind is probably finding ways to deny them.

We talk about pagan cultures sacrificing children to gods like Molech and Baal, and think it has nothing to do with our culture. 40 million abortions in the last 30 years... if you're a party to that, I do not condemn you, and Jesus

makes all things new. Yet, I imagine that sometimes it's felt like hell on earth.

Whenever we sin, we're making hell on earth.
When we deny the sin, we dig it deeper.

Around 6 million people, mostly Jews, were exterminated by Hitler. I toured Auschwitz last year. I remember thanking God for that museum and memorial so we couldn't deny that hell on earth, and hopefully, wouldn't deny the other hells on earth...

20 million under Stalin.
40 million in Mao Zedong's China (many martyred for their faith)
I've read that more Christians died for their faith in the last century than all the others combined.

Recently, Hawa Ahmed, a Moslem student in North Africa, found a Christian tract, read it, and gave her life to Christ. When her father found out, he and her brothers stripped her, tied her to a chair fastened to a metal plate, and tried to electrocute her. She finally broke free and ran through the streets naked, humiliated, and in pain.

Hell on earth.

And of course, we want to deny it happens, but it happens all over the globe, and it happens in our own city.

I thanked God for the Auschwitz memorial, because if we admit it happened to 6 million in Germany, maybe we'll admit that it happens to children in basements and garages in suburban America.

It's happened to several in our church.

It happened to one of my best friends. Over the years, I've told you about her. Her dad was a Satanist. She's been raped, beaten, abandoned, horrifically abused, subjected to intense torture, literally locked away in outer darkness for days. She's witnessed things and been subject to things far worse than anything I read about at the Holocaust Museum.

I probably wouldn't have believed her stories, except that I've done battle with Satan and the demons that have manifested in her flesh and harassed me in my home.

The Lord has even given my wife visions of my friend's memories such that Susan will whisper in my ear what our friend is looking at before she has the courage to tell us. Susan will get physically ill from what she sees and smells... bodies broken, blood shed, and demons. She's seeing and smelling hell.

You know, there are people that will complain to me about not seeing signs and wonders in worship. Yet they don't want anything to do with the signs and wonders that show up at 2 am in places where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, although they'll blow your socks off.

And I understand. I probably wouldn't have gone there either, except I felt I had to. Afterwards, I wanted to deny it was real because it's so hard to come to terms with hell on earth.

Denial is like a fortress in our minds to keep us from the pain of hell. America is a culture of denial, a fortress of denial. We dress our corpses in fine clothes and cocoon ourselves from a suffering world with wealth and legislation.

You know, Zion was a fortress... against hell, against the outer darkness. The temple was a fortress of

stone and legislation that housed the Holy of Holies and the everlasting consuming fire.

Some people think this building is like that. So they'll use potty words outside but would never speak them inside. They'll watch Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey but not in here. And they'll get real nervous about guarding the communion table from sinners because it's holy.

They're worried about guarding God's holiness from this world, but maybe it's really the other way around, and God is guarding this world from His holiness. So it's not that God is in danger of being infected with hell, it's that hell is in danger of being utterly consumed by God. And so God is gentle with hell because we're

trapped in it,
addicted to it, and
yet in denial of it.

Well, my point is that hell is in this world (not to say it isn't in the next). We try to build stone fortresses against it. We even build fortresses in our minds, even denying our own deaths and the slow decay of our bodies.

In fear, we hide from hell, Hades, sheol. We hide in outer darkness—where men “weep and gnash their teeth.”

In Matthew 16, Jesus said some fascinating things about hell and us. Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, son of the living God, and then Jesus said to Peter, “I tell you, you are Peter (Rocky) and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.”

Do you hear what that statement assumes about us,
the church?

It assumes we'll attack those gates.

Not that hell will try to break down our gates, but that we'll go to hell to bust open its gates.

Well dang, if Jesus really meant that, it means Satan's only hope is to keep us, the church, hiding in our stone temples and away from his gates.

And so his only real weapon is fear,
and our only real lack is faith.

Well, this is the second part of last week's sermon on Jesus' parable of the Great Banquet. In Matthew 22: 1-7, the called ones refuse the Great Banquet so judge themselves out. In the end, any place outside of the Great Banquet of life and light turns into hell where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Verse 8:

Then he [the king] said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find." And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

The found are lost, and the lost are found. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, the apollumi. He saves us by taking our curse, taking our sin and shame, and giving us His righteousness.

All the lost at the marriage supper of the lamb will be wearing the righteousness of one man, Jesus Christ. Apart from Him, we are all utterly naked even though we try to hide with fig leaves and law. It's interesting that in

scripture and culture, nakedness is a picture of shame... unless, of course, you expose your nakedness to your covenant partner in order that your spouse might cover you with himself or herself. Then your surrendered nakedness isn't shame, but holy.

We all, the many, are the bride of Christ, and He is the groom. He covers us and completes us.

Well, that's something to meditate on, but all these folks from the highways, lost and naked, both bad and good, all these wretches at the Great Banquet in Matthew 22 had to have gotten their wedding garment from someone as a gift because they sure couldn't afford it themselves,

someone incredibly wealthy and profoundly generous,

someone who deeply wanted the king to be pleased,

someone like the king's friend.

But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.

Ephesians 1:4, "We have been chosen in him [in Christ]." I think the many are us, and the few is the one chosen, Jesus. We are all called in Him. He's chosen to bear our curse. 2 Corinthians 5, "God made him to be sin

who knew no sin that we [the many] might become the righteousness of God.”

Jesus gave us His garment, and for our sake, descended into hell where men weep and gnash their teeth.

(No matter what you think of my interpretation of Matthew 22 and the man with no garment, we all confess in the Apostle’s Creed that Jesus descended into hell.)

In four days, Jesus will inaugurate the Great Banquet on Mount Zion by giving His bride His body broken and blood shed. He’ll be taken from the banquet outside the city where Roman soldiers will strip Him, dividing His garments among themselves. They crucify Him naked between two thieves in a cursed place where men weep and gnash their teeth.

From the 6th to the 9th hour, the sky grew dark. It was the outer darkness. At the 9th hour He cried, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” He had descended into hell. Then “Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.” Next verse, Matthew 27:51,

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

That is, the fortress was breached from the inside out.

The curtain ripped and something got out.

The Holiness got out.

The fire got out.

It will descend on the church at Pentecost.

Not an old stone temple,
but a new temple of living stones.

No longer a defensive fortress,
but an army to storm the gates of hell.

So Jesus cried from the cross, surrendering His spirit. The Holy of Holies was opened. Next verse, Matthew 27:52,

The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Jesus descended into hell, not only to bear our sins unto destruction, but to blow the gates of hell wide open and lead a host of captives free. Ephesians 4,

Christ “descended into the lower parts of the earth” and he ascended leading a “host of captives.” He ascended that he might “fill all things.”

1 Peter 3:18-19,

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; ¹in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison.

C.S. Lewis wrote,

Only the Greatest of all can make Himself small enough to enter Hell. For the higher a thing is, the lower it can descend. Only One

has descended into Hell. . . All moments that have been or shall be were, or are, present in the moment of His descending. There is no spirit in prison to whom He didn't preach.

Revelation 13:8, Jesus is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." So He died once for all, all time, all moments were present to Him at the cross.

So He didn't just descend into some abstract, theological hell.

I'm saying He descended into your hell.

I think He descended into each and every hell for He died for the "sins of the whole world," and He will "fill all things."

It appears that the first person who entered paradise clothed in the righteousness of Christ was a thief who met Jesus where men weep and gnash their teeth. Jesus was the naked, battered man next to him on the cross.

Do you remember where Paul, the murdering Pharisee, met Jesus? Jesus was revealed on the Damascus Road, but Paul had already seen Him. Jesus said, "Paul, why do you persecute me?"

Jesus had literally, actually, and physically descended into Paul's hell in the form of the brokenbodies and shed blood of those Paul was dragging off to prison where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

In three chapters, Matthew 25, Jesus tells us what He'll say on judgment day from His glorious throne,

"I was hungry..."

"I was thirsty..."

“I was a stranger...”

“I was naked...”

“I was sick...”

“I was in prison...”

Let me paraphrase...

“I was there where men weep and gnash their teeth.”

“Did you come to me
or were you hiding in your fortress,
afraid to approach the gates that I lay behind?”

Do you know why Mother Teresa ministered to those who live on less than a dollar a day? She writes, “I see Christ in the distressing disguise of the poor. The Eucharist and the poor are but one love for me.” He’s there where men weep and gnash their teeth. He’s there in broken bodies and shed blood.

He’s there in His people, persecuted for His name.

Hawa Ahmed’s father and brothers stripped her naked and bound her to a chair fixed to a metal plate and placed a Bible on her lap. But the electricity would not flow through her body. Finally, her father just beat her and cast her into the street, naked.

She ran through the streets utterly humiliated. People looked at her curiously but not shocked. Her friend found her, clothed her, and fed her.

The next day, this friend asked the neighbors what they thought when they saw Hawa running through the streets naked. They all asked, “What do you mean? The girl had a wonderful white dress on. We asked ourselves why someone so beautifully clothed had to run through the streets.”

Jesus had clothed her in His garment, a wedding dress. He'd taken her shame and given her His righteousness. That was just a sign of what He's done for all eternity.

Well, stories like that are often common where Christ is preached among those who weep and gnash their teeth, for the Living Word has descended into hell and descends into hell even as you preach the word.

By far the most horrifying glimpses of hell on earth that I have ever witnessed have come through the memories of my friend and the visions of my wife as we've prayed.

I've never witnessed such darkness, and yet it's there that I've fallen so thoroughly in love with the Light. For Jesus, the Light, has descended into her hell. The Light shines in the darkness.

Over and over again, Jesus appears in her memories and my wife's visions and changes the meaning of her hell, like He changed the meaning of the cross from the greatest curse to the greatest blessing.

His presence isn't only a mind game. It's the deepest reality. He descends through us in prayer and reveals He was there all along, even before she knew Him.

Once she was tied to a bed and raped. The man who did it took a knife and plunged it toward her heart. Just as he was about to penetrate her chest, the knife stopped. The man dropped it and ran in fear.

My friend always wondered why he didn't kill her. We prayed through that memory, and she saw Jesus there. He had stretched out His hand and stopped the knife. Which makes us wonder, "Why didn't He stop the rape?"

He didn't stop it... and yet He bore it. My friend called the day after we had prayed and shared this incredibly vivid dream,

I was tied up there, and then He appeared. He was wearing this white robe. He walked up to me and untied me from the bed to which I was tied. He bent down and picked me up, and He carried me over to the side of the room and sat me down in a chair. He looked in my eyes and said, "Honey, I'm here to protect your heart and your spirit." Then Jesus took off His white robe. He wrapped it around me. And I felt entirely safe. Then from that place of safety I watched as Jesus walked over to that bed and laid down on that bed where I had lain, and He tied Himself to the bed. Then I watched as they came in and did everything to Jesus that they had done to me.

You see, He'd descended into her hell to bear her hell and clothe her with His righteousness which is mercy.

Demons of fear and shame dwell in those hidden memories, but because Jesus is there she has courage to remember and courage to confess and courage to break down the gates of hell.

I've seen that Jesus clothes people in wedding garments as He raises them from the dead. He even descends into the old, dead bodies of those He's raised, so their broken body is His broken body, and their shed blood is His shed blood.

And Jesus is truly present in the outer darkness in that form where His bride weeps and gnashes her teeth.

Cast out... to be with her and
that she might taste the hell He chooses to bear
for the love of her.

And sometimes we've seen it, the fire comes and utterly consumes those hells and purifies what's left. And yet, the fire was already there in the heart of Christ. He is the Way, Truth, Life, and Light in the dominion of darkness, death, and lies.

He's the way when there is no way.

Now, you may feel extremely unable to relate to the story I've just shared, but perhaps you have a hell or two of your own. I mean a place of death and darkness and lies where you weep and gnash your teeth, alone in the outer darkness. You think no one knows and no one sees. Perhaps it's a memory or a deep wound. Perhaps it's an affair or a secret habit or a world of lies or unconfessed sin.

Well, if you belong to Christ, He's already there. I suspect He's there weeping and gnashing His teeth on your behalf, waiting for you to surrender your death, darkness, and lies to His life, light, and truth so He can set you free, and so He's no longer alone in your hell, for you have known Him there.

Unconfessed sin is hell,
but confessed sin is the kingdom of heaven.

Our prayer team can help you storm the gates of that hell, your own hell, or perhaps you are to storm the gates of another's hell, here on the mountain or on the other side of the world.

Last year at the Living Stones service, Marcia Hinds shared a recurring vision she's had of the ministry of Lookout Mountain around the world. She shared about

watching Jesus walk through villages, sad villages where people weep and gnash their teeth.

She would watch Jesus give them items from our church, and then she would see us kneeling by Jesus, washing faces, as well as hearts.

It was a beautiful vision, but she wrote me later saying,

There was one detail I didn't share that night because I didn't know how to say it. Jesus had no clothes on. He had given His clothes to those villagers as He washed their faces. I felt He had given His all, His everything. It's as you described; it's the man who had no wedding garment. It is the Lamb of God who has no wedding garment. He is the garment.

Jesus descends into hell and dresses His bride in His own self. He descends into hell before you and then He attacks the gates through you.

We, the church, need to stop fearing the gates of hell, and we need to start storming the gates of hell in Jesus' name. Our Lord has already conquered the powers of death. So even if we die, we live.

"Even if I make my bed in sheol," wrote David (Psalm 139), "behold thou art there." The way, the gate, the door is there where men weep and gnash their teeth.

If you want to see Jesus shine, take the Gospel and go to where men weep and gnash their teeth... maybe it's villages on the other side of the world, maybe it's the person next to you.

When I struggle in worship, I usually close my eyes and think of Jesus in hell where my friend has wept and gnashed her teeth. I think of Jesus there and how He shines there, and then I can't help worshipping

“for the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness cannot overcome it.”

It's two weeks until Easter. If you want to sing loud on Easter, go to the cross right now where men weep and gnash their teeth.

Was there ever a more horrifying sight
than the light of the world
cast naked into outer darkness?

Could there ever be a more glorious sight
than the Lamb
standing as if it had been slain?

The women at the cross on Friday saw Him first on Easter morning.

So, why am I telling you this stuff, Christian?

First, because I want us to see Jesus, “the light that shines in the darkness.” We'll find Him where they weep and gnash their teeth... like the shepherds found him lying in a manger, where people weep and gnash their teeth.

Second, we're called to war against the powers of hell. So we must no longer be afraid to storm those gates in Jesus' name (even if we die, we live).

Third, we must no longer be afraid of our own death, for we've been kept in bondage to Satan through the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15).

Now, don't make too much of this, but Bill and Ted, from the movie, they get out of hell because they beat the grim reaper at Battleship. In the book of Revelation, the reaper is one "like a Son of man with a crown on His head." I think His name is Jesus.

He chose to lose, that you would win.
 He chose to die, that you would live.
 He bears your hell, that you would receive His heaven.

Believe His mercy, and so sing His praises for all eternity.

And, by the way, He's not grim. Even on the night He was betrayed, He served a banquet.

He took the bread and broke it saying, "This is my body given to you. Do this in remembrance of me." And in the same way after supper, He took the cup, and He said, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me."

And so we invite you come to the table, tear off a piece of bread, dip it in the cup. The purple cups are juice. The black cups are wine. They're both fire. Fire to descend into the deepest, darkest, most frightened corners of you.

And so believe the Gospel, ingest the Gospel, and live the Gospel. Amen.

[The worship band plays.]

If You Want Me To

By Ginny Owens / Kyle Matthews

The pathway is broken,
And the signs are unclear
And I don't know the reason,
Why You brought me here
But just because You love me,
The way that You do
I'm gonna walk through the valley
If You want me to
No I'm not who I was,
When I took my first step
And I'm clingin' to the promise
You're not through with me yet
So if all of these trials,
Bring me closer to You
Then I will go through the fire
If You want me to

It may not be the way I would have chosen
When You lead me through a world
That's not my home
But You never said it would be easy
You only said I'll never go alone

So when the whole world turns against me
And I'm all by myself
And I can't hear You answer my cries for
help
I'll remember the suffering

That Your love put You through
 And I will walk through the darkness
 If You want me to
 'Cause when I cross over Jordan
 I'm gonna sing gonna shout
 I'm gonna look into Your eyes and see
 You never let me down
 So take me on the pathway
 That leads me home to You
 And I will walk through the valley
 If You want me to

Yes I will walk through the valley
 If You want me to

© 1999 Above The Rim Music / BMG Songs, Inc.
 For use solely in accordance with the SongSelect
 Basic Terms of Agreement. All rights Reserved.
 CCLI License #62700 CCLI Song #2993894

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Latin hymn from 12th century
 English translation by John M. Neale, 1818–1866

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
 and ransom captive Israel,
 that mourns in lonely exile here
 until the Son of God appear.

O come, O come, Thou Lord of might
 who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
 in ancient times didst give the law
 in cloud and majesty and awe.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell Thy people save
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
our spirits by Thine advent here;
O drive away the shades of night
and pierce the clouds and bring us light.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come
and open wide our heav'nly home
where all Thy saints with Thee shall dwell-
O come, O come, Emmanuel!

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

And so, Lord Jesus, You have come to us in body broken and blood shed, and You have descended into the depths of our being. Even now, Lord, in our physical bodies, that food we just took, that wine we just drank, it's circulating in our blood and nourishing our bodies. And you turn us into Your very own body. And You have conquered all things. Lord Jesus, You are the fire that cannot be put out by all the darkness in the world. And so, Lord God, we need to say to You that we're sorry. We're sorry for being so afraid. We're sorry for confessing that there's an immeasurable greatness of power that dwells in us and then cowering in fear. Lord Jesus, we thank You that You've already forgiven us. And You do clothe us. We are only beginning to see the depths of Your love that we will see for all eternity, the angels will be begging us to tell the stories about the King of glory who died and descended into hell for us. Thank you. Amen.

If you'd like prayer, we have a prayer ministry team, and they'd love to pray for you. I also want to encourage you, if you'd like to see the light shine, grab one of these missions booklets. There are a whole lot of places that our church is involved with. If you want to see the light shine, call one these places, one of our partner ministries, like Mozambique or things that are happening in China, and see if you can be a part of it.

By way of benediction, this is what I want to say. This is what Jesus told us, "In this world, you will have tribulation." He said that's the way it is, you'll have

tribulation. We live in a culture that constantly works to deny tribulation. Sometimes our churches are even wrapped around denying tribulation. Theologically, we even say, “Oh, well, that’s for people after the rapture when we get out of here.” Jesus said, “No. You, my people, will have tribulation.” That’s a big word. Sometimes I think tribulation is hardest for us in America because we’re so used to denying tribulation that when it happens, we think, “Oh my gosh, He’s left me.” No, He said, “In this world, you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome this world.” Believe the Gospel. You throw parties at the gates of hell. In Jesus’ name, amen.

We got totally lied to by our album covers. . . . Dude, hell sucks!

Bill and Ted’s Bogus Journey

Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Selah. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: *I am* shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Selah. Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

Psalm 88:6-12

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell [sheol] gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful.

Psalm 116:3-5

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell [sheol], behold, thou *art there*. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike to thee.

Psalm 139:7-12

I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great *is* thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell [sheol].

Psalm 86:12-13

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. . . . For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:2,6

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. . . . The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:5, 9-13

I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.”

Matthew 8:11-12

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage

feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.' But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

Matthew 22:1-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Ephesians 1:3-4

In the election of Jesus Christ, which is the eternal will of God, God has intended the first—namely, election, blessedness, and life for man; but the second—rejection, damnation, and death for himself.

Karl Barth

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21

And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; . . . Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?" that is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" . . . And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook,

and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Matthew 27:35, 45-46, 51-53

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison. . . . For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead, that though judged in the flesh like men, they might live in the spirit like God.

1 Peter 3:18-19, 4:6

And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. . . . But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?)

Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:7-9

Earth, I think, will not be found by anyone to be in the end a very distinct place. I think earth, if chosen instead of Heaven, will turn out to have been, all along, only a region in Hell; and earth, if put second to Heaven, to have been from the beginning a part of Heaven itself.

C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce, (Preface)

A damned soul is nearly nothing; it is shrunk, shut up in itself. Good beats upon the damned incessantly as sound waves beat on the ears of the deaf, but they cannot receive it. Their fists are clenched, their teeth are clenched, their eyes fast shut. First they will not, in the end they cannot, open their hands for gifts, or their mouths for food, or their eyes to see.

Then no one can ever reach them?

Only the Greatest of all can make Himself small enough to enter Hell. For the higher a thing is, the lower it can descend—a man can sympathise with a horse but a horse cannot sympathise with a rat. Only One has descended into Hell.

And will He ever do so again?

It was not once long ago that He did it. Time does not work that way when once ye have left the Earth. All moments that have been or shall be were, or are, present in the moment of His descending. There is no spirit in prison to whom He didn't preach.

C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock/I will build my church, and the gates of hell ["hades," the Greek translation of the Hebrew "sheol"] shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed/in heaven.

Matthew 16:18-19

The first thing that Jesus promises is suffering. "I tell you. . . you will be weeping and wailing. . . and you will be sorrowful." But He calls these pains birth pains. And so, what seems a hindrance becomes a way; what seems an obstacle becomes a door; and what seems a misfit becomes a cornerstone.

Henri Nouwen

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil;
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff,
they comfort me.

Psalm 23:4

"Death is swallowed up in victory."¹"O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:54b-58

© 2005 Peter Hiet

Lookout Mountain Community Church

534 Commons Drive, Golden CO 80401

Phone: 303-526-9287 Fax: 303-526-9361

E-mail: info@lomcc.org