

**Summary of Billy Porter’s sermon on “Hell”
(as heard on 3/11/2007, evening services)**

Disclaimer: I have constructed the following outline based upon my recollection of Billy Porter’s sermon, and with the aid of my mother’s handwritten notes. I do not have the convenience of a tape recording to aid my outlining. While my summary or my notes may be imperfect, I believe that this is an accurate representation of the sermon content.

Sermon Introduction – The Bible Preaches Hell

- Mr. Porter stated that he felt led to preach a sermon on hell.
- Some people have changed the meaning of the word *hell*. For example, Billy Graham has changed his meaning of the word *hell* to mean "separation from God."
- There is a "silly TV program" called "Fear Factor."
- There are 31 specific references to "hell" in the Old Testament, and 22 (sic) specific references to *hell* in the New Testament.
- There is more information about hell in the Bible than any other subject. Billy Porter read four verses from Psalms:

Psalms 9:17

The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.

Psalms 18:5

The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

Psalms 55:15

Let death seize upon them, *and* let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, *and* among them.

Psalms 116:3

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

- In the New Testament, Jesus Christ talked about hell more than any other subject. He talked about hell eight times in his 3 and ½ year ministry. Billy Porter referenced 4 scriptures: Matthew 5:22, Matthew 5:29, Matthew 10:28, and Luke 10:15. (I do not think he read these aloud.)

Sermon Point – Human Experiences Prove Hell

- Disclaimer from Billy Porter – he is not sure how authentic these human experiences are.
- Maurice Rawlings is a cardiologist. He observed a man dying in front of him that claimed "I'm in hell... you've got to do something... you've got to get me out!" Doctor Rawlings was taking a stress test from his still-living subject at the time.)

- The doctor Rawlings became scared and later “got saved” based on this experience.
- Doctor Rawlings began research by interviewing people who have been resuscitated. He found that they could not remember their impressions after about more than 15 minutes had passed from the experience. However, if he interviewed subjects within the 15 minutes, some people gave details involving torment and fire.
 - All of this information is based on a book written by Doctor Rawlings, based on his interviews.
 - A nurse from the state of Washington wrote an article. She witnessed to a patient who finally said “I do not want to hear the name of Jesus out of you.” Later he said “You’re on fire, the room is on fire...” and then said “I’m in hell don’t follow me” and afterwards he went to sleep and died.
 - Further disclaimer from Billy Porter - he cannot attest to the authenticity of the following three stories.
 - Fourteen kilometers beneath the earth’s surface, Russian engineers put a microphone into a well and heard “millions of souls screaming.” The communist engineer said that he “didn’t believe in God, but he now believed in hell.”
 - Jacques Costeau said heard the screams of hell when he was diving.
 - Some people have heard screams at the site of a volcanic eruption.

Sermon Point – The Logic of Justice Argument

- There are asylums for non-conformists.
- There is a Hell for those who don’t “get saved.”
- There are graveyards for the dead.
- There are cesspools for human waste.
- Billy Porter quoted Revelation 21:27.

Revelation 21:27

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

- We can only take the life of a murderer that takes a man’s firstborn son. But, punishment has got to be eternal - because God goes on forever.

Sermon Point – Hell is not good

- The expression “go to hell” is not wishing someone well.

Sermon Point – Colors have meanings

- Red is exciting, danger, stop, emergency vehicles, warning, etc. Green is OK, fine. Amber is caution. Brown and green are soothing.
- Most fire trucks are painted red.
- There is an old John Wayne movie called “Hellfighters” with Red Adair (an oil well firefighter)

- Elevators used to have a red button for down and a green button for up.
- “Red” China is communist.
- Satan is sometimes symbolized as being red with a pitchfork.
- Most people don’t realize that the symbol on an ambulance is a symbol of a serpent. The book of Numbers refers to fiery serpents sent to punish Israel, and they had to look at a brass serpent on a pole in order to be healed. Emergency lights are a symbol of death and dying.
- In the Bible, Satan is described as a red dragon.
- A “Red light” district is associated with sinful activity.
- “Sins are red as scarlet” is a biblical phrase.
- The Red Sea was God’s wrath on Pharaoh.

Sermon Point – Jesus describes a man tormented in hell

- In Luke 16:19 Jesus is describing a man in hell.
- States that this is not a parable. Billy Porter cited (not quoted) Luke 16:1 as proof.
- Hell Fact – A great gulf is fixed between hell and Abraham’s bosom.
- Hell Fact – These places are not too far from one to the other.
- Hell Fact – There are saved and there are lost.
- Hell Fact – “The rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torment” proves that the soul has a bodily shape, just like the body that we have here.
- Hell Fact – “Abraham’s bosom” is a special heaven for the saints that died before Jesus’s death.

Sermon Point – “More Facts About Hell”

- Hell is a fire, a place of torment.
- Being burnt is the worst thing that can happen to you. Our experience tells us that a burn is painful. Being aflame is so horrible, that when a WWII fighter pilot got stuck in his burning cockpit, he crashed his plane into the ground to escape.
- “Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth” proves agony.
- Hell has “No rest day or night” – if you stay up for a long time it is torturous.
- Hell is “outer darkness”
- The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever....it is a hotel where you check in and you don’t check out.
- There are firemen’s stories of people trapped in fire that cannot get out – it is a horrible experience.

Conclusion – We need to fear hell

- Hell is a fearful place.
- People used to advertise life insurance by using the “fear of losing a good deal”.
- “The Fear Factor” (a reference to the TV program) is essential to be saved.
- You cannot be saved without fearing hell.
- “Fear” is the beginning of wisdom.

Can Human Experiences Really Report the Afterlife?

Concerning his sermon point that human experience proves hell, Billy Porter offered a disclaimer that each of the stories was not entirely reliable, or able to be proven. **If the authenticity of a story is doubtful, why use it as a proof of the nature of hell?**

The man dying in front of Doctor Rawlings claimed that he was in hell, and wanted Doctor Rawlings to “do something” to “get him out.” **The man was alive at that time.** Approaching death can be a stressful experience, and he was clearly mistaken as to his physical location. In a court of law, could the ability of this man to give accurate testimony as to the nature of his distress be brought into question? Should this really be offered as a human experience that proves hell?

Doctor Rawlings interviewed other people when they had near death experiences. The reports he received would differ based upon as little as a 15 minute lapse from the experience. He said that some people (not all) reported details of torment or fire, if interviewed within 15 minutes of being resuscitated. Generally, it is not a good idea to interview someone within just after waking them from a deep sleep or a nightmare, **when they cannot accurately grasp the difference between the real and the imaginary.** Furthermore, the results are questionable given that it is assumed he interviewed people that would have been subject to “fire and brimstone” conditioning at some point in their lives. Should these really be offered as examples of human experiences that prove hell?

I have several friends that can recall vivid details of “past life experiences.” I have no reason to believe that these friends have reason to lie to me concerning their memories. If Doctor Rawlings’s interviews with people who have immediately been resuscitated are valid evidence of the nature of the afterlife, even though these “memories” fade within as little as 15 minutes, **would not my friends’ “past life experiences” constitute much more valid proofs** of the doctrine of reincarnation, since their memories do not fade at all? How would you explain to them why you would accept one but not the other?

If Russian engineers could burrow down until they could hear the “screams of hell” would it not stand to reason that they could dig further and deeper until they could launch a manned probe into hell itself? **Should we launch rescue missions** to save souls from hell, **or get camera footage** to use as motivational material for sermons?

Are the stories concerning Russian engineers digging down to hell, Jacques Costeau reporting hearing “screams of hell” when he was diving, or people at volcanic eruptions hearing “screams” actually solid evidence that we should use to back sermons? Simply because something preys on a preconceived notion does not mean it is authentic – for example, **apparitions of Mary have appeared to people at numerous locations** – this does not mean that we should trust them as authentic.

If there really is more information on hell in the Bible than on any other subject, why use valuable sermon time with unreliable stories of doubtful integrity? **It damages our credibility to offer these reports as evidence.**

Weighing Human Experience Against Biblical Doctrine

People claim to have all sorts of experiences that give them spiritual insight or to prove the supernatural. I believe we should have a healthy dose of skepticism, but that we should be able to state why or why not we would consider an account might be valid.

It should always be acceptable to question whether or not the person bringing the testimony is an unbiased witness – do they have a reason to lie? Could they have been tricked, pranked, or misled? How have they been conditioned to interpret details? Is there a normal mundane explanation for what they thought they heard or saw?

Christians should recognize that there are spiritual influences on people and things in our world. Dr. Kurt Koch has a small encyclopedia of various supernatural phenomena in his book Occult ABC. Some accounts can be explained (even best explained) by the influence or possession of devils on the human mind.

I believe that in the case of testimony that contradicts Christian doctrine, we have a duty to carefully examine its implications against the one measure we have already established as true and unyielding, that is, the Bible. Christians should have already proven to themselves that their Bible is correct and accurate.

Concerning the case of the Washington nurse (as told by Billy Porter) – she attempted to witness to an old man who rebuked her with “I do not want to hear the name of Jesus out of you.” He later exclaimed that “You’re on fire, the room is on fire... “ and finally “I’m in hell don’t follow me” before going to sleep and dying.

Does our bible contradict the testimony of this witness?

Revelation 20:5-6

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 20:12-15 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Jesus has told us that the dead are not judged until 1000 years after His return, and only then, after judgment, are those not written in the book of life cast into the lake of fire. I will accept the testimony of Jesus over the ravings of a dying cantankerous old man.

Lazarus and the Rich Man

Billy Porter used the story of Lazarus and the rich man (in Luke 16) as biblical authority concerning the nature of hell. However, we know that Jesus spoke in parables, and that even his disciples became confused until He would explain the meaning of the parables to them, privately. It seems that the counter for this objection is to simply state “This is not a parable” and **without allowing any further discussion of the matter**.

I once heard someone claim that “Lazarus and the rich man” cannot be a parable, because the name “Lazarus” is used. Of course, it was reasoned, no parable uses a name for a person, therefore, this cannot be a parable, but a historical account. I hope it is obvious why this is faulty **circular reasoning** – you must assume that the story is not a parable before you can prove it is not a parable.

I have heard someone else claim that Lazarus and the rich man does not specifically state that Jesus began to speak a parable for that particular story. Therefore, they claim that unless the Bible specifically states that Jesus was speaking in a parable, that he was dictating a literal account of actual people. This line of reasoning must also be discarded, because this has no scriptural support (and as we are about to prove, is anti-scriptural.)

To the contrary, our Bible instructs us that you must assume that when Jesus told a story to an audience of people other than his disciples, that he was speaking a parable. **It is even plainly stated that Jesus only spoke to the multitude in parables.**

Luke 8:10

And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: **but to others in parables**; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Matthew 13:10-13

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. **Therefore speak I to them in parables**: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

Matthew 13:34-36

All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

Simply put, if Jesus were to speak plainly, without parable, to the multitudes, he would have broken one of the **messianic prophecies that identified Him as our savior**. To claim that Jesus spoke without parable to those that were not his private disciples would be denying Jesus, the prophets, and the integrity of the gospel accounts.

Since we must assume that Jesus spoke in parable, next we must examine the passage for an exception – was Jesus speaking to a small audience, His disciples, or was He speaking aloud where anyone could hear?

Even to His disciples, Jesus often spoke in parables, but He sometimes had to explain **when they failed to understand**. As an example, here is a clearly stated exception in the gospel of John 11:4 (which is speaking of a different person, a very literal Lazarus):

John 11:11-13 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, **Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep**. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

John 11:14 **Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.**

With this in mind, let us examine the context of the story of Lazarus and the rich man. Specifically, who was present for this story **that begins in Luke 16:19**?

Luke 15:1-3

Then drew near unto him **all the publicans and sinners for to hear him**. And the **Pharisees and scribes** murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

Luke 16:1

And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

Luke 16:14-15

And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Jesus begins speaking to a huge diverse multitude in Luke 15:1, and continues to speak [in parable] through Luke 17:10. It then states that he went to Jerusalem by way of Samaria and Galilee in Luke 17:11, with no indication of an earlier change of audience.

Regardless, the gospel clearly says that “Lazarus and the rich man” **was aimed at the Pharisees (verses 14-15)** – and it was spoken to a multitude other than His disciples. **Thus our Bible tells us that Lazarus and the rich man is a parable.**

What Elements of this Parable Can We Interpret Literally?

A fictional story may contain elements of truth. However, fiction is not a vehicle for proclaiming news or discoveries, and elements of a parable should not be interpreted literally to establish Christian doctrine **without further scriptural support**. Therefore, the Christian should use the rest of scripture, not tradition, as the standard for what elements of a parable may be interpreted literally, if any.

Parable element: a certain rich man

The rich man is clothed in purple and fine linen, he calls Abraham his father, and he has five brothers, all of which we are told have Moses and the prophets. The Pharisees would naturally identify this man as their favorite in the parable. Purple and fine linen are associated with royalty or royal favor (see Esther 8:15), the kingly lineage of Israel descends from David (of the tribe of Judah), the Jews do call Abraham father (Luke 3:8, John 8:39, John 8:53, Acts 7:2), and Judah has five brothers: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, and Zebulun (Genesis 29:35-30:20.) The rich man is obviously Jewish, but when the specific information about his brothers is given, he is identified as Judah (or in a broader sense, the Jews.) All the details fit.

Parable element: a certain beggar, named Lazarus

The beggar lies outside the gate of the rich man, but he is not allowed inside. He is associated with the dogs which lick his sores, which gather for the crumbs from the rich man's table. He is obviously unclean. The gentiles had always been kept separate from the Jews. The connotation of dog with gentile was easily seen in Matthew 15:23-28, and interestingly enough, in that account, the gentile woman makes a **similar mention of desiring the crumbs that fall from Israel's table**. Just as the rich man is obviously Jewish, the beggar is obviously gentile. However, we are supposed to sympathize with the gentile (as opposed to the rich man) thus he is given a name: Lazarus (which seems to have been a common name during that day, see John 11:5.)

Parable element: Abraham's bosom

When Lazarus dies, the angels carry him to Abraham's bosom. What is Abraham's bosom? **It is never mentioned in scripture outside of this parable**. Simply put, it was a Jewish analogy of heaven – a grand feast where you sat at the head of the table, right next to Abraham – at his bosom.

The Jews of that day were under no delusion that anyone was carried off by angels when they died. Solomon tells us that the dead know nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:4-6). Mary understood that the resurrection of the dead would occur in the last day (John 11:23-24.) The Pharisees also believed in the resurrection of the dead, while the Saducees believed that not even resurrection awaited the dead (Acts 23:8). We are also told that no man has ascended to heaven, save the Son of man, Jesus Christ (John 3:13).

Abraham's bosom is a symbol for the Jewish reward – it is a Jewish fable (see Titus 1:14). However, the gentile beggar receives the reward that the Pharisees no doubt imagined should have been reserved for the Jewish rich man. The Pharisees were not pleased.

Parable element: Hell, [a place of] torment

The rich man dies and is buried. In the parable he is now in hell, and in torment. However, this hell is not the hell of eternal fire that Jesus preached of in his ministry. Jesus always used the Greek word *gehenna* when referring to the final punishment following the day of judgment. **This time he used a different Greek word for hell, *Hades***, not in its normal euphemism for death, but in the mythological sense. The rich man finds himself in the gentile underworld, a total turnabout from what he expected.

Nowhere in either the Old or New Testaments are we told that the dead are tormented (by flame, ice, darkness, lack of sleep, thirst, hunger, rolling stones uphill, or otherwise) while they await the resurrection and judgment. This is a pagan doctrine, and **although it was quickly adopted by the Papacy, it is not biblical in origin.**

To the contrary, the Bible tells us numerous times that the dead sleep. This metaphor is used constantly and consistently throughout both Old and New Testaments, and as such, we must assume it is **an accurate metaphor**. The patriarchs and kings of Israel “slept with their fathers” regardless of how righteous or evil they had been in life (Deuteronomy 31:16, I Kings 2:10, I Kings 22:40, Acts 13:36.) Jesus refers to death as sleep (Luke 8:52, John 11:11-13.) Paul also speaks of death as a sleep until the resurrection of the dead (Acts 13:36, I Thessalonians 4:14, 5:10, I Corinthians 15:51).

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Daniel is told not only that the dead sleep, but that **they sleep in the dust of the earth**. Furthermore, it is also emphasized that both the righteous and the unrighteous sleep the same sleep in the dust – **they are dead until the resurrection.**

Daniel 12:2-4

2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

In short, a Greek fable is set counterpoint to the Jewish fable referred to earlier. These elements also are used only within the scope of this specific parable, and the Bible does not present this as Christian doctrine – they are used only within this specific story.

However, you can guess the Pharisee’s reaction when the story tells us that the descendant of Abraham is being tormented in a Gentile hell, while the beggar they despise is exalted at the head table beside their revered patriarch Abraham!

Parable element: “send him to my father’s house”

The rich man is talking with Abraham. His first request is that Lazarus be sent to serve him, to bring him water for his tongue. This being denied, he asks that Lazarus be sent to his father's house, to warn his brothers.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.
30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.
31 And he said unto him, **If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.**

Within the last lines of this parable, Jesus has made a prophecy: even if someone was sent to them, they would not hear, even if He were to rise from the dead, the Jews would still not repent. Sadly, we know this was this case.

The Jews and the Pharisees did have Moses and the prophets – did they hear them?

John 1:45

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, **of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write**, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Luke 24:27

27 **And beginning at Moses and all the prophets**, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44-48

44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, **which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms**, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,
46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

And for the final irony, Jesus even literally raised his actual friend (also named Lazarus) from the dead! Did the Pharisees heed this witness and repent?

John 11:43-53

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46 **But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.**

47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

48 **If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.**

49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for **to put him to death.**

What was the stated purpose of this parable?

Luke 16:14-16

And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. **The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.**

This parable shows that although the Jewish people took their status for granted, thinking that only they had Moses and the prophets, that their special favor was about to be stripped away. What they had taken lightly was to be taken from them and offered to the gentiles. This is also illustrated in the parable of the king's wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-14, as well as Peter's vision in Acts 10 (see also Romans 3:29 and 1 Corinthians 12:13.)

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man is not a historical account, nor was it intended to contradict **actual Biblical doctrine** of death, the resurrection, and judgment. It is not a sermon on the nature of death or the afterlife. It is simply a parable.

Luke 8:10

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

What is the Logic of Justice?

It was never properly explained exactly what was meant by the “Logic of Justice” – so I will attempt to go through each point within this part of the sermon.

Logic of Justice – Asylums for Non-conformists

This seems like a very poor analogy for God’s justice. Our modern day system of asylums are typically places where people are inhumanely imprisoned or abused, who may even have been locked away for social or political reasons. Our modern ungodly society does have asylums for non-conformists, but no such model system was set up for Israel. **The system of asylums is neither a demonstration of logic or justice.**

Logic of Justice – There is a Hell for those who don’t “get saved”

There are multiple meanings of the word “hell” in the bible. Assuming that he is referring to eternal punishment, *gehenna*, the lake of fire, this is scriptural.

Revelation 20:14-15

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Logic of Justice – Graveyards for the dead

We do bury dead bodies today, even as they did thousands of years ago. But those that die are not alive, and they are still in their graves until Christ’s return, and the resurrection of the dead.

John 5:28-29

Marvel not at this: **for the hour is coming**, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Logic of Justice – Cesspools for human waste

These cesspools are usually put where humans do not live.

Logic of Justice – Punishment has got to be eternal – because God goes on forever.

This statement, standing alone, is technically correct. However, what Billy Porter is alluding to is not **eternal punishment**, but **eternal punishing**. Since now it has been mentioned that God is eternal, let us also remember that God is omniscient and omnipresent.

There is no place that God could remove someone to where He would not also be there. The only way to remove the rebellious and unrepentant from His presence would be to destroy it completely. We do not put cesspools in our gardens or inside our houses. We incinerate it and turn it into ash. We show mercy to a rabid dog and we shoot it, we do not torture it. We do not slowly roast our cesspools to eternalize its putrid aroma.

Matthew 10:28

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to **destroy both soul and body** in hell.

Malachi 4:1-3

1 For, behold, **the day cometh**, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; **for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet** in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

Revelation 21:8

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: **which is the second death.**

Revelation 21:4

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, **neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.**

The implications and underlying assumptions at this point in the sermon were that God plans to grant eternal life to the unrepentant, so that he can then torture them forever. At this point in the sermon, he had not demonstrated that there was any scriptural support for this.

Furthermore, **this was not demonstrated at any point** in the sermon.

The message was that God is a vengeful God that can only be satisfied through human torment and suffering, and that millions of souls writhing in pain who did not “get saved” are required to sate his vengeance. Is this what God wants? Is this what He designed? Are humans really immortal to the extent that God cannot grant them the same mercy that we would to a rabid dog (that it should perish?)

It was implied that the only vengeance a human father can take on someone that kills His firstborn son is to execute the murderer... but that God must for some reason demand eternal torture because God is eternal. Is that the character of God?

Luke 23:33-34

33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.** And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Life and Death

It seems that the subject of hell and the resurrection is obscured because the meanings of life and death have been turned upside down and inside out. **Some people have been changing the meanings of dead and alive!**

Life means alive, moving, and breathing.

Genesis 1:20

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly **the moving creature that hath life**, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

Genesis 2:7

7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life; and man became a living soul.**

The first prophecy in our Bible promises death.

Genesis 2:16-17

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die.**

The first lie in our Bible is from the serpent – it claims that Adam and Eve already had eternal life, and that God did not have the power to kill them.

Genesis 3:4

And the serpent said unto the woman, **Ye shall not surely die:**

Since Adam's fall, all of us are born into this world with the assurance that we shall surely die. **That prophecy was fulfilled** – Adam did die (Gen 5:5) - this was determined (surely) that very day when they sinned against God.

Genesis 5:5

And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: **and he died.**

Eternal life is a **gift**. That means we do not have eternal life, and without it, we will die. We cannot resurrect ourselves, so we would eternally **stay dead**. Note that the Bible says that **the wages of sin are death, not eternal life in torment.**

Romans 6:23

23 For the **wages of sin is death**; but **the gift of God is eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John 3:15-16

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not **perish**, but have **everlasting life.**

Concerning “More Facts About Hell”

Sermon Point: Hell is a fire, a place of torment

This is a misleading statement. The word *hell*, when used in the Bible, is defined by context. You cannot apply the same uniform meaning from one scripture to the next. To anyone who would argue against this, I will propose to them that hell is actually a fish, and show them the scripture.

Jonah 2:1-2

Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly,
And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of
the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

Is hell a fish? It says Jonah was in the fish's belly, and then it says that Jonah cried from the belly of hell. Is it logical to replace the word “hell” with the word “fish” throughout the Bible? What about just the Old Testament? (This is a rhetorical question.)

I could demonstrate in quite a number of ways where the word *hell* is used that obviously does not equate hell with fire. Additionally, other than used in a single parable, *hell* is not described as a place of torment for the dead. Like other Biblical terms (heaven, for example, has multiple meanings) the word *hell* cannot be casually used out of context.

Sermon Point: Being burnt is the worst thing that can happen to you.

This seems to be a matter of personal opinion or preference. I am not sure that I can find scriptural support for this. Regardless, it implies that God is vengeful and desires to inflict not only pain, but it must be the worst pain imaginable.

Sermon Point: “Weeping and Wailing and gnashing of teeth” proves agony

This does not prove agony and personal pain; it does seem to demonstrate grief and anguish or even resentment. However, we do have historical accounts of people who have been burned to death (many martyrs have been burned by the Catholic church) and being burnt does not seem to produce weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. You would be likely to witness the “weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth” when someone is sentenced to being burnt, but not while they are being burnt, and certainly not after they have been burnt to ashes. This was not a convincing proof.

Sermon Point: “Hell has no rest day or night”

The Old Testament refers to death as sleep at least 40 times, and the New Testament also refers to death as sleep many times as well. The Lake of Fire in Revelation is referred to as the “second death” with nothing otherwise to distinguish its character from the first death (except that there is no resurrection from the second death.)

There was no scriptural reference given for this point, but there are two references to “no rest day or night” that both occur in Revelation:

Rev 4:8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Rev 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever 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.

In the first case, the reference to no rest day or night does not seem to be a punishment at all, but rather a blessed duty. I will assume that the reference was intended for Revelations 14:11. However, this is not in the context of hell and the final judgment – this occurs before Jesus returns to earth, and concerns the people **who are still alive and worship the beast** (the beast of Rev 13:17.) This event is further detailed in Revelation 18 – a city (a modern day Babylon) that will be burned with fire in one day...

These seem to refer to the same event. How many times can Babylon be utterly destroyed by fire in the end times? I think the answer is only once.

Revelation 14:8-11

8 And there followed another angel, saying, **Babylon is fallen, is fallen**, that great city, because **she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication**.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 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:

11 **And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever 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.

Revelation 18:1-24

1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, **Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen**, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 **For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication**, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, **when they shall see the smoke of her burning,**

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to naught. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 **Rejoice over her, thou heaven,** and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, **Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.**

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

The reference to smoke and fire in Revelation 14:11 is not a description of hell or the final day of judgment. It is an earthly sentence on [modern-day] Babylon before Christ's return, on a very real city that in all likelihood exists today. The saints will rejoice, but it will terrify the living that are enemies of God and worship the Beast. Perhaps it is reasonable to assume that it is they who will have no rest day or night

– the beast cannot protect them from God’s wrath, no matter how much the Beast blames Babylon’s destruction on “terrorism” and promises security in exchange for freedom. The dead no longer worship anything, that is an action of the living. Let’s not confuse this prophetic warning (we should be warning that city) with a doctrine of *hell*.

Sermon Point: Hell is “outer darkness”

Matthew 8:12, 22:13, and 25:30 all contain parables that refer to *gehenna* as outer darkness. This seems to further support this being a method of absolute destruction, rather than being burnt without end. Fire is associated with heat and light, but darkness is associated with annihilation.

Sermon Point: The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever

Assuming that this is another reference to Revelation 14:11, again, this is not a reference to hell, hell fire, the lake of fire, or the Final Judgment. This is one of the events that will happen preceding the return of Christ – an earthly judgment delivered upon an entire city.

On that note, notice that although Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by **eternal fire, they are not still burning**. They were burnt up and destroyed, converted into ash (so the Bible tells us in Second Peter).

Genesis 19:24

Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah **brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;**

Jude 1:7

Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, **suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**

2 Peter 2:6 **And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes** condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an example unto those that after should live ungodly;

Matt 11:34 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom **in the day of judgment**, than for thee.

Note that it does not say there are people being burnt in that fire forever and ever. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by God’s fire in Lot’s day, and their inhabitants died, and **were still awaiting the day of judgment when Christ walked the earth.**

Sermon Point: Fireman’s stories of people trapped in fire

I am willing to bet that the people who were trapped in the fire died, and will remain dead until the resurrection and the Judgment - not still burning alive in that same fire.

Can You Be Saved Without Fearing Hell?

The conclusion of this sermon stated that “**You cannot be saved without fearing hell.**” I never have “feared hell” and don’t think that I ever will. I trust that God is not only just, but also merciful, and that even eternal death is a mercy to those that will not repent. **Does this mean that I am unsaved?**

Acts 16:29-31

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,** and thy house.

The apostles said that you needed to only **believe on the Lord Jesus Christ** to be saved. I have a tract from the Bible Baptist Church in Beeville Texas, which it tells me that Romans 10:13 says “**For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.**”

I do not believe that God delights in torture, or that when He promises eternal death, that he really means eternal life in torture. Neither do I believe that He wants us to simply fear punishment.

II John 4:17-19 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. **There is no fear in love;** but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. **He that feareth is not made perfect in love.** We love him, because he first loved us.

Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

I do agree with the initial premise of the sermon – that is, that some people definitely have **changed the meaning** of the word *hell*. I think that we should take care to make sure that when we use the word *hell* that we use it within the biblical context and meaning, and that we do not attempt to impose our own meaning on top of what the Bible says, or attempt to preach a meaning that the Bible does not support.

If we knowingly misrepresent God’s word, we would then have good reason to **fear hell.**

Rev 21:8

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, **and all liars,** shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Rev 21:27

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, **or maketh a lie:** but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Appendix A: The word *hell* in the Old and New Testament

The word *hell* appears 53 times in the Authorized King James Bible: 31 times from the Hebrew word *sheol*, 10 times from the Greek word *hades*, 12 times from the Greek word *gehenna*, and only once from the Greek word *tartarus*.

Hell (from the Hebrew word <i>sheol</i>) occurs 31 times in the Old Testament		
Deuteronomy 32:22	Proverbs 5:5	Isaiah 5:14
2 Samuel 22:6	Proverbs 7:27	Isaiah 14:9
Job 11:8	Proverbs 9:18	Isaiah 14:15
Job 26:6	Proverbs 15:11	Isaiah 28:15
Psalms 9:17	Proverbs 15:24	Isaiah 28:18
Psalms 16:10	Proverbs 23:14	Isaiah 57:9
Psalms 18:5	Proverbs 27:20	Ezekiel 31:16,17
Psalms 55:15		Ezekiel 31:17
Psalms 86:13		Ezekiel 32:21
Psalms 116:3		Ezekiel 32:27
Psalms 139:8		Amos 9:2
		Jonah 2:2
		Habakkuk 2:5

Hell (from the Greek word <i>hades</i>) occurs 10 times in the New Testament		
Matthew 11:23	Acts 2:27	Revelation 1:18
Matthew 16:18	Acts 2:31	Revelation 6:8
Luke 10:15		Revelation 20:13
Luke 16:23		Revelation 20:14

Hell (from the Greek word <i>gehenna</i>) occurs 12 times in the New Testament		
Matthew 5:22	Mark 9:43	Luke 12:5
Matthew 5:29	Mark 9:45	James 3:6
Matthew 5:30	Mark 9:47	
Matthew 10:28		
Matthew 18:9		
Matthew 23:15		
Matthew 23:33		

Hell (from the Greek word <i>tartarus</i>) occurs 1 time in the New Testament
2 Peter 2:4

Appendix B: Sheol, Hades, Gehenna, and Tartarus

Our bible contains four separate words that are translated as the English word *hell*. The Hebrew of the Old Testament uses the word *sheol* exclusively, and the Greek of the New Testament uses the words *hades*, *gehenna*, and *tartarus*. The modern day English word *hell* covers a broad range of meanings that includes the scope of the Hebrew and Greek words of our bible.

H7585

שׂאֵל שְׂאֵל

sh^oʾōl sh^oʾōl

sheh-ole', sheh-ole'

From H7592; *hades* or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean *retreat*), including its accessories and inmates: - grave, hell, pit.

G86

ᾠδης

hadēs

hah'-dace

From G1 (as a negative particle) and G1492; properly *unseen*, that is, “Hades” or the place (state) of departed souls: - grave, hell.

G1067

γέεννα

geenna

gheh'-en-nah

Of Hebrew origin ([H1516] and [H2011]); *valley of* (the son of) *Hinnom*; *gehenna* (or *Ge-Hinnom*), a valley of Jerusalem, used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment: - hell.

G5020

ταρταρόω

tartaroō

tar-tar-o'-o

From Τάρταρος Tartarōs (the deepest *abyss* of Hades); to *incarcerate* in eternal torment: - cast down to hell.

These definitions are copied verbatim from Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries, as published in Rick Meyer's e-Sword Bible software (version 7.7.0). It may be downloaded for free from www.e-sword.net.

Appendix C: Lazarus and the Rich Man

Luke 15:1-3

- 1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.
- 2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.
- 3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

Luke 16:14-31

- 14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.
- 15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.
- 16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.
- 17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.
- 18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.
- 19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:
- 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,
- 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.
- 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;
- 23 And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.
- 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.
- 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.
- 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.
- 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:
- 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.
- 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.
- 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.
- 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.