

Chester Cycle 1572/2010**Play 16****The Harrowing of Hell**

Cast: ADAM, ISAIAH, SIMEON, JOHN THE BAPTIST, SETH, DAVID, SATAN, SECOND DEVIL, THIRD DEVIL, JESUS, MICHAEL, ENOCH, ELIJAH, THIEF, ALE-WIFE.

*And at the start there shall be physical light in Hell contrived by some device,
and then Adam shall speak.*

ADAM	Oh Lord and Sovereign Saviour, our comfort and our counsellor, of this light thou art author as I see well in sight.	
5	This is a sign thou wilt succour thy folks that live in great languor, and of the Devil be conqueror, as thou hast yore behight.	<i>misery</i>
10	Me thou madest, Lord, of clay, and gave me Paradise in to play; but through my sin, the truth to say, deprived I was therefro, and from that joy put away, and here have lived since ay	<i>ever</i>
15	in darkness both night and day, with all my kind also.	
20	Now, by this light that I now see, joy is come, Lord, through thee, and on thy people thou hast pity to put them out of pain. Surely, it may none other be, but now thou hast mercy on me, and mankind through thy posty thou wilt restore again.	<i>power</i>
ISAIAH 26	Yea, certainly, this same light comes from God's Son Almighty, for so I prophesied aright while that I was living.	
30	Then I to all men beheight, as I ghostly saw in sight, these words that I shall to my might rehearse without tarrying:	<i>promised</i>
	<i>"Populus qui ambulabat in tenebris vidit lucem magnam." [The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light]</i>	
35	"The people" I said that time express, "that went about in darkness seen a full great lightness" - as we done now each one. Now is fulfilled my prophecy that I, the prophet Isaiah wrote in my book that will not lie, whoso will look thereon.	
40		

- SIMEON
- And I, Simeon, sooth to say,
will honour God all that I may;
for when Christ child was, truly,
in temple I him took
45 and, as the Holy Ghost that day
taught me before I went away,
these words I said to God's pay *delight*
that men may find in book:
- “Nunc dimittis servum tuum, domine, secundum verbum tuum, in pace.”
[Now let thy servant depart in peace according to thy word]
- 50 There I prayed, without lies,
that God would let me be in peace,
for he is Christ that come was -
I had both felt and seen -
that he had ordained for Man's heal, *remedy*
joy to the people of Israel.
- 55 Now is it won, that same weal,
happiness
for us, withouten ween. *for certain*
- JOHN BAPT.
- 60 Yea, Lord, I am that prophet John
that baptised thee in Flood Jordan
and prophesied to every nation
to warn of thy coming
to bring the people to salvation
by merit of thy bitter Passion,
through faith and penance to have remission
and with thee to have dwelling.
- “Penitentiam agite! Appropinquat enim regnum caelorum.”
[Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand]
- 65 And with my finger I showed express,
when I lived in wilderness
a lamb, an emblem of thy likeness,
our ransom for to be.
At thy coming we had forgiveness;
70 Mercy concluded Righteousness.
Wherefore these words I do rehearse
with honour unto thee.
- “Ecce agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata mundi.”
[Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world]
- SETH
- 75 And I, Seth, Adam's son, am here
that living went, without were, *truthfully*
to ask at Paradise a prayer
from God, as I shall say:
that he would grant an angel quickly
to give me oil of his mercy
to anoint my father in his annoy *distress*
80 in sickness when he lay.
- 85 Then to me appeared Michael
and bade me labour never a deal, *not a bit*
and said for grieving nor prayers fele *many*
that grant me not to seek;
nor of that oil might I have none,
made I never so much moan,
till five thousand years were gone

and five hundred eke.

also

As all kneel, David shall speak.

DAVID
90 Ah, High God and King of Bliss,
worshipped be thy name, iwiss!
I believe that time now come is
delivered to be of languor.
Come. Lord, come to hell anon
and take out thy folks every one,
95 for the years be all come and gone
since Mankind first came here.

misery

Then Satan, sitting in his throne, shall speak to the devils.

SATAN
100 Hell-hounds all that been here,
makes you ready with boast and bere,
for to this fellowship together
there hastens a wondrous freke.
A noble morsel ye have mon -
Jesus, that is God's Son,
comes hither, with us to won,
On him now ye you wreak.

strife

*knight
may*

*dwel
take vengeance*

105 A man he is fully, truly,
for greatly death he feared today,
and these words I heard him say:
"My soul is thirsty unto death."
Such as I made halt and blind,
110 he has them healed into their kind.
Therefore this blusterer look ye bind
in torment of Hell-breath.

proper condition

2ND DEVIL
115 Sir Satanas, what man is he
that should thee deprive of thy posty?
How dare he act against thee
and dread his death today?
Greater than thou he seems to be,
for cast down from your degree
120 thou must be soon, well I see,
and deprived of thy prey.

power

rank

3RD DEVIL
125 Who is he so stiff and strong
that so dominating comes us among,
our fellowship as if he would fong?
But thereof he shall fail!
Threaten he us with any wrong,
he shall sing a sorry song;
but on thee, Satan, before long,
if his will ought avail ---

seize

SATAN
130 Against this shrew that com-es here
I tempted the folk in foul manner.
Vinegar and gall to his dinner
I made them for to dight,
and since to hang him on rood-tree.
Now is he dead, right as through me,
135 and to Hell, as ye shall see,
he comes anon in height.

prepare

2ND DEVIL
Sir Satanas, is not this that sire
that raised Lazarus out of the fire?

DAVID
186 I, King David, now well may say
my prophecy fulfilled is, truly,
as now shows in sight veray,
and soothly here is seen.
190 I taught men thus here in my life-day
to worship God by all way,
that Hell-gates he should affray *attack*
and win that his hath been.

“Confiteantur domino misericordiae eius et mirabilia eius, filiis hominis contivit portas aereas et vectes ferreas confregit.” [Oh that man would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder]

JESUS
195 Open up Hell-gates, yet I say,
ye princes of pain that be present,
and let the King of Bliss pass this way
that he may fulfill his intent.

SATAN Stay! What, what is he, that King of Bliss?

DAVID
200 That Lord the which Almighty is -
in war no power like to his;
of Bliss is greatest King.
And to him is none like, iwiss,
as is truly seen by this,
for men that sometimes did amiss
to his bliss he will them bring.

At this point the patriarchs are taken out. (Here must God take out Adam.)

JESUS
206 Peace to thee, Adam, my darling,
and eke to all thy offspring
that righteous were on Earth living.
From me now ye shall not sever.
210 To bliss now I will you bring
there you shall be, without ending.
Michael, lead these men singing
to bliss that lasteth alway.

MICHAEL
215 Lord, your will done shall be.
Come forth, Adam, come with me.
My Lord upon the rood-tree
your sins hath forbought. *redeemed*
Now shall you have liking and lee, *joy*
and be restored to your degree
that Satan with his subtlety
220 from bliss to bale had brought.

*Then Michael shall lead out Adam and the saints to Paradise, and Enoch and Elijah
and the Redeemed Thief shall meet them.*

SATAN
225 Out. Alas! Now goes away
all my prisoners and my prey,
and I myself may not start away,
I am so closely tied.
Now comes Christ. Sorrow I may
for me and my company for ay.
Never, since God made the first day,
were we so sore afraid.

Here Adam must speak to Enoch and Elijah.

- 280 that present be in place:
woeful am I with thee to dwell,
Sir Satanus, sergeant of Hell.
Endless sorrow and pains cruel
I suffer in this case.
- 285 Sometime I was a taverner,
a gentle gossip and a tapster,
of wine and ale a trusty brewer,
which woe hath me wrought.
Of cans I kept no true measure.
- 290 My cups I sold at my pleasure,
deceiving many a creature.
Then my ale were nought.
- And when I was a brewer long,
with hops I made me ale strong;
ashes and herbs I blend among
and marred so good malt.
Therefore I may my hands wring,
shake my cups, and cans ring.
Sorrowful may I sigh and sing
that ever I so dealt.
- 295
- 300 Taverners, tapsters of this city
shall be promoted here with me
for breaking statutes of this country,
hurting the common weal,
with all tippers-tappers that are cunning,
mis-spending much malt, brewing so thin,
selling small cups money to win,
against all truth to deal.
- 305
- 310 Therefore this place now ordained is
for such ill-doers so much amiss.
Here shall they have their joy and bliss,
exalted by the neck, *raised high*
with the greatest master who walks on ground,
for casting malt besides the comb,
much water taking for to compound,
and little of the malt-sack -
- 315
- with all masher, mengers of wine, in the night
brewing so, blending against day-light.
Such new-made claret is cause full right
of sickness and disease!
- 320 Thus I betake you, more and less,
to my sweet master, Sir Satanus,
to dwell with him in his place
when it shall you please.
- SATAN
326 Welcome, dear daughter, to us all three.
Though Jesus be gone with our company,
yet shalt thou abide here still with me
in pain without end.
- 2ND DEVIL
330 Welcome, sweet lady! I will thee wed!
For many a heavy and drunken head
because of thy ale were brought to bed
far worse than any beast.
- 3RD DEVIL Welcome, dear darling, to endless bale!

335 Using cards, dice, and cups small,
 with many false oaths, to sell thy ale -
 now thou shall have a feast!