

**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 that men may find in book:	<i>delight</i>
	“Nunc dimittis servum tuum, domine, secundum verbum tuum, in pace.” <i>[Now let thy servant depart in peace according to thy word]</i>	
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, joy to the people of Israel.	<i>remedy</i>
55	Now is it won, that same weal, <i>happiness</i> for us, withouten ween.	<i>for certain</i>
JOHN BAPT.	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.	
60	“Penitentiam agite! Appropinquat enim regnum caelorum.” <i>[Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand]</i>	
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; Mercy concluded Righteousness.	
70	Wherefore these words I do rehearse with honour unto thee.  “Ecce agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata mundi.” <i>[Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world]</i>	
SETH	And I, Seth, Adam's son, am here that living went, without were,	<i>truthfully</i>
75	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 in sickness when he lay.	<i>distress</i>
80	Then to me appeared Michael and bade me labour never a deal, and said for grieving nor prayers fele 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	<i>not a bit many</i>
85		

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*

2<sup>ND</sup> 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*

3<sup>RD</sup> 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*

2<sup>ND</sup> 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 verrey,  
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.
- 2<sup>ND</sup> 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.
- 3<sup>RD</sup> 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!