

Hell Is Real

Hell is a real place where unsaved souls go to wait for the final judgement of mankind. Hell has not been invented by fundamentalists to frighten people into being 'good'. The subject of hell is so distasteful, many pastors and preachers will not teach on the subject for fear of scaring parishioners away. Many people today feel that 'hell-fire and brimstone' preaching has no place in our modern churches and have 'watered down' the truth and the terrible, terrible reality of eternity without God. That thinking is wrong. Christians forget John the Baptist, Jesus and the apostles all preached about hell and so should we. John the Baptist was not being negative when he called the Pharisees and Sadducees 'vipers'. John encouraged everyone to face up to the truth about themselves, rather than blaming others for their sin.

We, who know the truth, have an obligation to tell the truth to others. God doesn't give us divine revelations so we can enjoy them and sit on them; God gives us revelations so we can share that knowledge with as many people as possible. Christians have the God-given responsibility to tell the unsaved, the consequences of rejecting our Saviour and we should be out there telling everybody we can. It would be a terrible feeling to be safely going into eternity with God, only to have a loved one – a grandparent for example – say to you, "I could have been going with you – if only you had told me – now I'm destined for eternity without God." Stop for a moment and close your eyes. Picture that scenario. A loved one on their way to hell, screaming for mercy because you chose not to tell them! We must open our mouths and speak of the love of God and the only way of salvation – which is through Jesus (Acts 8:35).

In the Old Testament, hell was known as Sheol which means 'the place of the dead'. Sheol burns with the Lord's anger. Deuteronomy 32:22 says; 'For a fire is kindled by My anger and it burns to the depths of Sheol ...' From the first recorded death of Abel right up to the time of Jesus resurrection; every adult who died went to Sheol. Children, it seems go straight to be with God because they are too young to be considered sinners. In 2 Samuel 12:23, David had accepted the death of his baby boy and knew he was in heaven, and David said he would one day go to join his baby.

A person has to make a conscious decision to reject God, before God blots their names out of His book that was written before the foundation of the world (Exodus 32:32 & 33; Deuteronomy 29:20; Psalm 9:5; 69:28; Daniel 12:1 and Revelation 17:8); but they will still fall down and worship Jesus (Revelation 13:8). Once a person repents, their names are written into a different book called the Lamb's Book of Life where only the righteous people have their names written (Psalm 69:28; 139:16; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 20:12; 21:27).

The words Hades and Gehenna, were only used in the New Testament but mean the same as Sheol. When Jesus was dead for those three days, He went into Hades/Sheol and preached to the people there (1 Peter 3:19 & 20; 4:6). When Jesus walked out of Hades then rose from the dead, He overcame death and Hades (Revelation 1:18). Those who were waiting in Hades, and who accepted Him would have been sent to heaven; some rose and walked around the earth for about a month (Matthew 27:52). Sheol/Hades can't have been too terrible, or everybody would have repented and turned to Jesus out of terror; but just like people on earth – most didn't repent. They will rise again for the final judgement. See Revelation 20:15; 'And if anyone's name was not recorded in the Book of Life, he was hurled into the lake of fire'.

What did John the Baptist say about hell? Matthew 3:7, 8 & 12; 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath of God? Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance. The chaff He (Jesus) will burn up with fire that cannot be put out'.

Luke 3:9 & 17; 'Even now, the axe is laid to the root of the trees, so that every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. But the chaff He (Jesus) will burn with fire that cannot be extinguished'.

What did Jesus have to say about hell? (Jesus said so much about hell, we cannot write everything He said.) Matthew 5:22; 'Whoever says "You cursed fool" will be unable to escape the hell of fire'.

Matthew 5:29 & 30; 'It is better to lose an eye or hand than your whole body be cast into hell'.

Matthew 8:12; '... will be driven into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing (grinding) of teeth'.

Matthew 10:28; 'Be afraid of Him Who can destroy both soul and body in hell'.

Matthew 11:21 to 23; 'Woe to you Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum ... you shall be brought down to Hades, the region of the dead ...'

Matthew 18:8 & 9; 'It is better for you to enter eternal life maimed than to have two hands, two feet and two eyes, and be thrown into everlasting fire'.

Matthew 22:13; 'Tie him hand and foot and throw him into outer darkness where there will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. For many are called but few are chosen'. (Why are there few chosen? Because few repent of their sins in order to be saved.)

Matthew 24:51; 'God will scourge him and put him with the hypocrites; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'.

Matthew 25:30 & 46; 'Throw the good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then they will go away into eternal punishment ...'

Mark 9:43 to 48; 'It is better for you to go into eternal life maimed than go to hell; into the fire that cannot be put out – with two hands. It is better to go into eternal life crippled, than having two feet, to be cast into hell. It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye than be thrown into hell with two eyes. Hell is where their 'worm' does not die and the fire is not put out. (The worm is that which preys on the inhabitants and is a symbol of the wounds inflicted on the man himself, by his own sins.)

Luke 13:28; 'There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you, yourselves, being banished and driven out'.

The most detail Jesus gave us was in Luke 16:19 to 31, where a wealthy man went down to hell and a poor man went up into heaven. They could see each other; they could speak to each other; the people in hell could feel the pain of torment but there was no release. Here is part of that passage of scripture; 'And in hell, the realm of the dead, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far away and the poor man, Lazarus in heaven. And he cried out ... "have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame." Abraham said; "Between us and you a great chasm has been fixed in order that those who want to pass from this place to you may not be able, and no one may pass from there to us."

These above verses show us that Jesus was serious about the reality of hell and everlasting punishment. Hell is real; it is a waiting place for those who are headed for the lake of fire which is much worse (Revelation 20:10, 14 & 15); hell is torment and suffering; people in hell will see the righteous in heaven and vice versa; it is not possible to move between hell and heaven; hell is full of sadness and regret; the devil, the beast and the false prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire with unsaved people and fallen angels (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6) who are already in pits of gloom and darkness while they too wait for the final judgement. When people see the devil in the lake of fire, he will be in the same situation as unsaved people and will therefore not be so scary (Isaiah 14:12 to 17). The lake of fire was designed for the devil and his fallen angels – not for people (Matthew 25:41), but sadly there will be more people in there than in heaven. There is more on this subject, on this website, in the sermon titled 'The Great White Throne'.

What did the apostles say about hell? We learn from Paul that we have the victory over the fear of death and that there is no fear of damnation. In 1 Corinthians 15:55 Paul said; "Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory?" The wonderfully great news is this: 'If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved' (Romans 10:9 & 10). 'Repent therefore and be baptised, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38). 'If we confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9). If you have done these things and since God has cleansed you from unrighteousness – then you will be righteous and He will write your name in the Lamb's Book of Life! Hallelujah!!

Amen and God bless you.

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