

SO - YOU ARE DEAD, NOW WHAT? - 2

Is Hell Real?

Luke 16: 19-31 - ¹⁹ “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹ desiring to be fed with [□]the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² So it was that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.²³ **And being in torments** in Hades, he lifted his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

²⁴ “Then 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 in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now **he is comforted and you are tormented.**’ ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

²⁷ “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come **to this place of torment.**’ ²⁹ Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ ³¹ But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”

The story is set in the year 1300. Dante’ (Put up Picture of Dante’) pen’s his famous work “Inferno”. *Inferno* is the first poem in a three-part series called *The Divine Comedy*- Considered by most the greatest medieval power written in vernacular language. *Inferno* is an allegorical journey through Hell. In part, *Inferno* is a political allegory, and in part it is a religious allegory. It is also a story following the classic elements of a comedy—it starts in the depths of Hell but ends with the joys of Heaven.

Dante’ wakes up on the evening of Good Friday in a dark world with no recollection of how he got there. In the distance he says a foothill where the sun shines brightly. He starts his ascent. But as he climbs, he encounters a leopard, a lion and then a shewolf. Overcome by these animals he has no option but to turn back toward the dark forest. He comes across a spirit known as Virgil, a once famous poet. He tells Dante’ he can guide him into paradise, but first they must journey through Hell. Together they pass through the infamous gates of hell. As you can imagine this was not a pleasant journey. According to his account in “Inferno” it is a place filled with torment, woe and pain.

He describes the sky as black as pitch where no light could be seen and the air was so thick with the moans of grief and sorrow you could not breathe. He writes about a line of naked, tormented souls chasing a unattainable flag while being stung by wasps and hornets. The tears

they wept and the blood from their wounds dripped onto the ground that was covered with maggots and worms.

He describes in great detail the landscape, the beast, tormented spirits, the agony and even the atmosphere as the journey fearfully through the nine circles of hell – From Limbo to the worst compartment of torment reserved for the desperately wicked.

As powerful as his description is, it was not thought original to him. Dante's Inferno is based on Catholic theology and the Bible, as well as classical epic poems and mythology (such as the Aeneid, The Iliad, and The Odyssey).

Jesus talked about hell approximately 1270 years before Dante'. His words were not based on mythology or the philosophy of the day. His warnings about this dreaded place flowed from the eternal knowledge of the Godhead.

- There is very little preaching in the American pulpit about Hell. If there was more Bible preaching about hell from the pulpit, there would be less hell in the streets and in the pews of America.
- Hell is out of date in today's thinking, but it is not out of business.
- Hell is the eternal home of every person who rejects the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The hellish hoards of the realms of darkness have sold the foolish propaganda to the minds of progressives and conservatives alike that hell isn't a real place and that no one really goes there. For me to preach a sermon on Hell today in most religious circles makes me an absolute right-wing, conspiratorial fanatical.

- We are in fact a generation that is religious but lost.
- We are swimming in a moral sewer.
- Every perversion known to man is justified and celebrated, even by so-called believers.

If a child understands that if he pushes the boundaries of disobedience that there is going to be discipline on the other end of his decision, he thinks twice about crossing the line.

If a man knows he can steal, murderer or rape without punishment his fallen, devilish nature will be emboldened and he will continue his destructive ways without reservation. However, if he is certain that his action will land him in prison where an electric chair is awaiting him. He will think twice about his actions.

Any man who knows the horror of Luke 16 would never do such things...

America has forgotten that there is punishment for criminal behavior:

- **Homicide:** One person is murdered every 31 minutes.
- **Rape:** One person is raped every 30 seconds.

- **Aggravated Assault:** One person is assaulted every 36.9 seconds.⁴
- One home is burglarized every 18 seconds.
- **Domestic Violence:** One woman is victimized by an intimate partner every 52 seconds. One man is victimized every 3.5 minutes.
- **Child Abuse and Neglect:** One child is reported abused or neglected every 34.9 seconds.
- **Drunk Driving:** One person is killed in an alcohol related traffic crash every 40.4 minutes.
- **Elder Abuse:** One elderly person is victimized by a violent crime every 4.2 minutes.
- **Hate Crime:** One hate crime is reported to the police every 69 minutes.
- 200 thousand babies a day are brutally murdered in the womb of their mothers.

Christians no longer embrace capital punishment, but I can assure you that is God's law. We are responsible for our actions and there is a pay day someday. America's justice system might have become too sick and weak to enforce the law of God on crime, but I assure you that there is coming a day of reckoning when you will stand before an all seeing and all-knowing God who will judge and punish the guilty.

The church in America has forgotten the concept of punishment for sin. Our grace teachings have given us a blank check to live like we wish without giving an account of ourselves. I assure you that is not what the Bible teaches.

As a result of this diabolical embrace of a Gospel without hell, the American church has abandoned the great commission – Soul Winning. We are infatuated with what God will do for us, but we want to hear nothing of what God wants to do through us. Without hell in our belief system we embrace carnality and comfort. We have ritual without righteousness, hype without holiness, we have shouts without substance. We have a form, but we lack power.

But I don't like this kind of preaching, it scares me...

Jesus said, *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28*

- 62% of Americans say they believe in a literal place called hell, but only 1% believes anyone goes there as a result of their lifestyle.
- **Jesus said twice as much about hell as he did about heaven.**

Every person under the sound of my voice will stand before God and give an account of every word, thought and deed done in your life. With the eyes you are looking at me with, you will look at him. With the ears that you hear me today, you will hear his voice as he reads the out of the book of your life.

There will be no lawyers to get you out of it, no plea bargaining, no plea of insanity. There will be no psychologist on the stand explaining the details or the whys of your behavior. All of us will stand before him and give an account. **So, get your house in order today...**

Does the Bible really teach about a literal place called hell...

The tender, merciful, loving, compassionate savior believed in hell and warned us...

- Mark 9:46 - 'Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.'
- John 3:17-18 - ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
 - Condemned to what if there is no hell?
- 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 - ⁸in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. (Paul believed in hell)
- Revelation 14: 10 - ¹⁰he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. (John the revelator believed in hell)
- Revelation 20:15 - And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

IF THESE MEN BELIEVED IN HELL, WE NEED DARE NOT DISBELIEVE IT!

Shocking truths about hell:

1. THE MAJORITY ARE GOING THERE!

- Matthew 7:13-14 - ¹³"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and **there are many who go in** by it. ¹⁴Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and **there are few who find it.**

2. HELL IS A PLACE OF UNSPEAKABLE SUFFERING.

If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. Matthew 5:29

...will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night

for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." Revelation 14:10-11

Gehenna (gheh'-en-nah); valley of Hinnom; place of everlasting punishment.

...'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' Luke 16:27-28

3. HELL EXISTS FOR GOD TO DEAL RIGHTEOUSLY WITH SATAN.

...Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25:41

- Hell was never meant to be a place for you or me.
- God never sends anyone to hell – hell is a place where you pay your own bill.

4. HOW EASY IT IS TO GO THERE.

There are 4 ways to be lost found in Luke 15: The lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son, the lost elder brother:

- **The sheep was lost because of its careless meandering.**
 - Sheep are innocent and kind of stupid – they are timid, tender and normally passive.
 - Careless living and foolish choices
- **The coin was lost because it was out of circulation.**
 - It did not cease to be silver, nor did it leave the house.
 - Because it was out of circulation it rendered no service.
- **The lost son – the prodigal – he was lost because he left the house.**
 - He was feeding pigs, for a Jew it was the lowest state.
 - He left home saying “give me”, but he came home saying “make me.”
 - He left home a “son”, but he came back a “slave.”
- **The elder brother – He was lost because he was in the house, but the house was not in him.**
 - He was religious and bitter, hard shelled.
 - Finding fault with everyone, filled with the poison of condemnation – Grace killers.
 - This Christian lives in every church in America.
 - Whitewashed tombs, but full of dead men’s bones.
 - Clouds without rain and wells without water.
 - Have you forgotten your first love?

Conclusion:

LESSONS FROM THE OTHER SIDE

- THE RICH MAN WAS FULLY CONSCIOUS.
- HIS ETERNAL DESTINY WAS IRROVACABLY FIXED.
- HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS EXPERIENCING WAS JUST.
- HE PLEADED FOR SOMEONE TO HELP HIS LOVED ONES KNOW JESUS.

(PUT QUOTE ON SCREEN) “Sir, I do not share your faith. But if I did—if I believed what you say you believed—then although England were covered with broken glass from coast to coast, I would crawl the length and breath of it on hand and knee and think the pain worthwhile, just to save a single soul from this eternal hell of which you speak.” Charles Peace

- **GOD DOESN'T WANT ANYONE TO GO TO HELL.**

... *(The Lord) is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.* 2 Peter 3:9