

WHERE DO THE DEAD GO?

Death is a topic most people do not like to talk about. When the topic does come up, they talk about it in philosophical terms or quickly change the subject. Many will disguise their fear by turning the subject into a joking matter. Man is afraid of dying! As a result, man has been pushing the envelope of science in hopes of discovering ways to increase his longevity.

Dear reader, you cannot avoid the subject of death no matter how hard you try. Death is a vital part of life. The Bible, the Word of God, has a lot to say about death.

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:” (Hebrews 9:27). *“...For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”* (James 4:14)

God’s Word states man has an appointed time and the days of his life are short in comparison to eternity. Methuselah, the oldest person in the Bible, lived 969 years. On the scale of eternity 969 years does not even register. Even a million years of life would not move the needle on the scale of eternity! *“And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.”* (Genesis 5:27)

When man is willing to address the subject of death honestly, he will reveal the basis of his fear. He will admit it is the fear of the unknown and the fear of suffering eternal damnation. But he still refuses to believe God and would rather believe a lie, *“...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved”* (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

This reminds me of a pastor who was preaching at a Bible conference years ago. In his message he stated that one of his professors at the religious college he was attending made the statement, “No one can know for sure where he will spend eternity”. After that statement was made he asked the professor if

he could ask him a question. He was granted permission and posed the following question which the professor could not answer. "If you have no idea where you are going, why should I follow you and your teachings? It is like the blind following the blind and both will end up in the ditch." It is obvious religion does not have the answers. Only the Bible holds all the precious truths pertaining to life and death and what happens after one dies.

The following events take place after the death of the unsaved. They will hear the following words from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, "...*I never knew you.*" (Matthew 7:23). "...*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*" (Matthew 25:41).

Their first stop will be hell. Hell is located in the center of the earth, a furnace of fire and brimstone where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. Even though they will be surrounded by a continuous flame that cannot be quenched, the darkness will be so great they will not be able to see others around them. There will be no way to block out the terrifying screams of agony by their fellow companions. There will be no way they can get comfortable in their new home. There will be no relief from the constant torments from the fire and brimstone. There will be no laughter from all those earthly jokes about hell, for they are in a place where there is no hope, no mercy, no happiness and no joy. This is just the beginning of eternal sufferings. The last phase of their journey ends with their sentencing at the Great White Throne. They will receive degrees of hell and then they will be cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity where they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

There are many unbiblical teachings about hell and each religious system has its own false interpretation. Some promote Soul Sleeping, others promote the Annihilation of the Wicked, some teach the "Wait and See" doctrine known as the theory of uncertainty, and some totally deny the existence of hell. None of these teachings can be found in the Word of God. The purpose of

these false teachings by Satan and his ministers is to keep their members under subjection by instilling a false sense of security. I do not know about you, but there is no way I want to trust my eternal destiny to those who promote their counterfeit teachings. We are talking about eternity! *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”* (1 John 4:1). It is essential we accept God’s way of salvation, *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”* (1 Corinthians 1:18)

If heaven is a real place then hell is just as real and there is no uncertainty where one will spend eternity. The choice is heaven or hell! The Word of God settles the uncertainty once and for all. *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3). *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”* (1 John 5:13)

The Bible teaches there is a literal hell and the first time hell is mentioned in the New Testament is from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. *“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”* (Matthew 5:22). The Bible gives us all the information God wants us to know about a place called hell. Hell was created for Satan and his angels and the fact that it was created and that it has gates indicates that it is a real place. *“...Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”* (Matthew 25:41). *“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;”* (2 Peter 2:4). *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* (Matthew 16:18). Hell

is a place of great torment in a literal fire, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. *“And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”* (Matthew 13:42)

In Luke chapter 16, Jesus gives us a detailed account of a man in hell and the description of the environment that exists there. This is not a parable as some may suggest. There is no parable in the Bible that uses proper names, nor did Jesus call it a parable.

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 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; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 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. 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. 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. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” (Luke 16:19-31)

This detailed account of a man that was cast into hell exposes

the errors of the false teachings mentioned earlier. Hell is the holding cell for the unsaved dead while they wait for their final sentencing at the Great White Throne.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 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.” (Revelation 20:11-15)

The Great White Throne Judgment is where the unsaved dead will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, the Righteous Judge, to receive degrees of hell. *“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:”* (John 5:22). *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* (Philippians 2:10, 11). This judgment is not based on your good works outweighing your sins. Neither is this judgment going to determine if any time already spent in hell is going to shorten your stay in the Lake of Fire. This judgment is only for those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life. The lost will stand before God with their heads bowed. The books will be opened and sentencing will begin. They will be judged for all their sins, for every idol word that they said, even those secret sins they thought no one knew about. God knows them all and has kept a record.

After they receive their sentencing, they will be cast body and soul into the Lake of Fire - their final home, for all eternity. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever with Satan and

his angels. *“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”* (Revelation 20:10). *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the 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 21:8)

The Bible teaches that God is love in 1 John 4:8 and 16. God loved us so much He allowed His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to go to Calvary’s cross for you and for me, in order to pay that great sin debt, which we cannot pay. *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* (1 John 4:10). *“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.”* (John 3:16)

The Scriptures make it very clear that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners so man does not have to go to hell. *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”* (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus said, *“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”* (Luke 5:32). *“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* (Luke 19:10)

Man is a lost sinner with a sin nature and deserves to go to hell. No matter how moral, self-righteous or religious a man may be, he only deceives himself if he believes he is not a sinner. *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”* (1 John 1:8). Please read Romans chapters 1 through 3. God says all men are sinners, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”* (Romans 3:23), and all are born with a sin nature due to the result of Adam’s sin. *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”* (Romans 5:12).

Sin is a capital offense and the wages of sin is death. Man cannot save himself. *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;”* (Isaiah 64:6). Because of God’s holiness He cannot look upon sin. When Jesus was shedding His blood on Calvary’s tree He cried out, *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*. God the Father, could not look upon God the Son, when He bore our sins in His Own body. God has manifested His great love to mankind by allowing Calvary, where the Lord Jesus Christ took our place and bore the penalty for our sins: past, present and future.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21). *“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”* (1 Peter 2:24)

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:4-6)

Jesus’ last words on Calvary’s Cross, *“It is finished”*, would take volumes to explain. What these three very precious words mean for mankind! Jesus finished redemption’s plan. Jesus paid it all. *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;”* (Hebrews 10:12). The only sacrifice for sin that was acceptable to a holy and righteous God was God’s great sacrifice at Calvary. *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”* (Colossians 1:14). Jesus Christ, the mighty conqueror, conquered death, the grave and hell. God provided a perfect way for man to escape the eternal damnation of hell. So when someone asks how a loving God can send anyone to hell, just remind him of God’s great love and the great sacrifice that Jesus paid for all mankind.

God has given man a free will and he chooses where he will spend eternity on this side of death. The only reason why one goes to hell is because he does not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. *“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”* (John 3:18). When one does not believe on the Son of God, he is calling a holy, righteous, and loving God a liar. *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”* (1 John 5:10-12)

So when someone asks me, “Pastor, what do I have to do to go to hell?” I simply reply, “Nothing!” Those in hell are there because they all died in unbelief. It does not matter if you are a drunkard, a drug addict, a murderer, an adulterer, or even a good, moral, religious individual. If you have not put your faith entirely in the finished cross work of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will end up in hell. *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”* (John 3:36)

Dear reader, please do not continue any longer in the sin of unbelief.

In closing, I would like to ask you a very important question from God’s Word. In reading the following verse please make it personal: replace the “we” with “I”. *“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;”* (Hebrews 2:3).

Answer: Acts 16:30, 31 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

Please write us and let us know of your decision for Christ.