



What Will Hell Be Like?

“And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:15

Has anyone jokingly told you to “Go to hell”? Hell is no joke! There really is a hell. It is a place designed by God to separate those who hate him from those who love him. Because Jesus spoke over seventy times about hell, we know he took it very seriously. One day he told a story to help people understand the horrors of what would happen to those who refused to love and believe in him. Not only would they be separated from God forever but would go to a place (hell) where they would be tormented forever. This is a paraphrase of his story.

A picture of hell

There was once a very rich man who dressed in the latest fashions and lived in a beautiful mansion with the best of everything. Every day a beggar named Lazarus, hungry and full of sores, came and lay at his door. He thought, “Maybe today I’ll get the table scraps from the rich man’s table.” But the rich man had no compassion and ignored him. The only comfort Lazarus had were the dogs who came and licked his open sores.

Finally, the beggar, who trusted God, died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham (father of true believers). There was no burial. Perhaps his body was picked up by the street sweepers and thrown on a trash heap. Then the rich man died. Dressed in his best suit, his body was buried in a beautiful casket, surrounded by all his rich friends. But his soul or conscious self went to the place of the dead for those who don’t believe in Jesus (hell). There, in terrible agony and torment, he saw Lazarus in the far distance with Abraham. The rich man shouted, “Father Abraham, have pity on me! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in agony in these flames!”

But Abraham said to him, “Son, remember your lifetime of luxury, ease, and indulgence and how Lazarus was at your door, hungry and hurting? Now he is here being comforted forever, and you are in anguish.” Abraham explained that there is a great chasm between heaven and hell. No one can cross over, even if they wanted to.

Then the rich man thought of his five brothers. He called to Abraham again, “Send Lazarus back to warn my brothers about this place of torment so they won’t have to come here.” But Abraham said, “Moses and the prophets (Old Testament) have already warned them. They can read their writings any time they want to.” The rich man insisted, “No, if someone is sent from the dead, then they will turn from their sins.” But Abraham said, “If they won’t

listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen to anyone, even if he rises from the dead." (Luke 16:19-31)

From Jesus' story, we learn at least five things.

- A true believer will have compassion for the sick and hungry
- People are still conscious after death.
- Hell is a real place where people will be tormented (flame, thirst, etc.) forever in a bottomless pit where the fire is not quenched. They are separated from a loving God and his love forever.
- There will be no second chance after death. A person cannot change their mind.
- It will be impossible for the dead to communicate with the living.

Other descriptions used to describe hell are: fire and brimstone (sulfur), flames of fire, eternal fire, pits of darkness, unquenchable fire, eternal punishment, and lake of fire. Residents in hell are described as weeping and gnashing their teeth, unable to rest day or night and continuously being tormented. They are doomed to live this way with the Devil and his demons. Forever, they will live with their regrets and hopelessness. One cannot imagine such horror!

God's plan

God doesn't want anyone to go to hell! It must break his heart. He created hell for Satan and his evil angels (demons). So why do some people go to hell? Why doesn't God just destroy them? When God created people and angels, he created them to live forever. Since God is absolutely holy (pure and sinless), he cannot be in the direct presence of sinful people. Therefore, all who are sinful must be separated from God. They cannot be allowed to enter heaven.

But God had a plan. The Apostle Peter said that before the world was even created, God knew man would sin. He planned for his Son to leave his heavenly home, come to earth, and willingly die and take the punishment for the sins of the world. (Acts 2:23) Then when people believed in Jesus and received him as their Lord and Savior, God would forgive their sins and cover them with his goodness (righteousness). They would be welcomed into his family. What an amazing plan!

God doesn't send anyone to hell. By rejecting Christ a person goes to hell. This devotional was not written to scare you but to remind you to be continually grateful for your salvation and to motivate you to pray for people you know who are not believers. Make a list of friends and relatives who do not know Jesus and pray for them regularly. When opportunities come to share, the Holy Spirit will give you power to witness. You can be part of God's plan to rescue those who are choosing hell! It is God's will that everyone be saved! (Read 2 Peter 3:8-10.

Attitude:

- What attitude change do you need to make to take hell seriously?

Explore:

- Read “What is Hell Like?” (See Luke 16:19-21) and “What Is the Worst Punishment of Hell?” (See 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

Talking With God:

- Thank you Lord for saving me and preparing me for heaven. Remind me of people for whom I should pray. Open up opportunities to tell others about you and fill me with your power to witness.