

## **Is Hell a Real Place? Where is it Located?**

### **Introduction:**

1. Many people shun the idea of a literal hell. Some laugh, some mock, and some ridicule any person who dares to believe in and teach a literal hell.
2. Many preachers would privately tell you that they believe in a literal hell, but they don't dare mention it from the platforms of their churches for fear that it may turn people off. They avoid the subject, publicly.
3. Some believe that the doctrine of hell is not really that important. They don't consider it a crucial, fundamental doctrine of the faith. Their attitude is, "If you believe in hell, that is fine; but if you don't, that is okay too."
4. But, what we find as we study this subject is that the character of our Savior is at stake over this subject. Jesus talked about hell constantly and emphatically, describing it in literal terms. Example: Matthew 13:40-42, 49-51; 16:18; 18:9; 23:15, 33
5. If hell is not real, then Jesus was a phony and a liar, and nothing He said or did really matters. The character and truthfulness of our Savior is at stake.
6. As we study the Scriptures, we discover that hell is a literal place, and it has a literal geographic location, just as much as Daytona Beach, Florida.
7. As we contemplate the subject of hell, every believer should seek to win to Christ those who are lost in their sins. Why? Because...

### **Hell is a literal place.**

1. Where is hell located? This is a great question, and the Bible has the answer.
2. Hell is always referred to as being "down."
  - Psalm 55:15 - "...let them go **down** quick [alive] into hell..." cf. 63:9
  - Proverbs 15:24 - "... that he may depart from hell **beneath**."
  - Isaiah 14:9 - "**Hell** from **beneath**..."
  - Isaiah 14:15 - "**Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell**..."
  - Luke 10:15 - When a man is standing on the earth, he gets to hell by going down towards the center of earth.
  - 2 Peter 2:4 - God cast the angels **down** to hell.
3. Hell is located in the heart, or center, of the earth.
4. When Jonah was swallowed by the great fish, his body was in the fish for three days, but his soul was in hell. Jonah 1:17; 2:1, 6
5. Where did Jonah go? Where was hell? When you cross-reference with Matthew 12:40, you learn from the lips of Jesus where hell is located. Christ uses Jonah as an illustration and identifies it as being "*in the heart of the earth*."
  - Just as Jonah's body was in the fish, Christ's body was in the tomb.
  - Just as Jonah's soul was in hell, Christ's soul would also be in hell for those three days, in the heart of the earth.

6. It is important to understand that there were two compartments that composed hell (Hades) at that time. There was a torment side, and there was a paradise side (a place of blessing and comfort).
  - There was a great gulf in between the two. We will learn the reason for this in a future lesson.
  - Obviously, Jonah and Jesus were in the paradise side of hell.
7. But, for right now, we simply need to realize that hell is a literal place with a definite geographic location in the center of the earth.

### **Hell is an undeniable reality.**

#### **1. Hell demonstrates the wrath of God toward sin.**

- When Paul explains the gospel of Christ in the book of Romans, the first issue he deals with is the wrath of God. Romans 1:18
  - The word “*revealed*” is the Greek word ap-ok-al-oo-p-to. It means “to take the cover off.” When Christ rose from the dead, left this earth, and ascended into heaven, this brought assurance that God's wrath would fall on His enemies. Acts 2:34-36
  - Christ's ascension signaled the fact that God's wrath was on the way. Of course God, in His kindness, delayed the wrath with the dispensation of grace. We live in a time of “wrath delayed.” We have been living right on the precipice of God's wrath for 2,000 years.
- Although wrath has been delayed, it surely will come. Romans 2:5
- We learn in Revelation 14:10 what it means to drink of the full wrath of God.
- Why did Paul begin with the wrath of God when explaining the gospel of Christ?
  - Because before you can understand **grace**, you must first understand **wrath**. There is no need for salvation unless there is a clear and present danger.
- This is why Christ died on the cross. He bore our wrath and judgment so that we wouldn't have to bear it.
- When we understand the wrath of God against sin and the undeniable reality of hell, it magnifies grace and causes people to appreciate it.

#### **2. Hell is spoken of in literal terms. Matthew 5:22, 29 (Sermon on the Mount); 25:41; Mark 9:47-49**

- The Greek word for “fire” is “pur,” and it is the same word used in Luke 22:55 when they kindled a fire, and is described as “*a fire of coals*” in John 18:18.
- Hell is not a figurative expression for the grave. Try reading “grave” into Luke 12:4-5. After I'm dead, why would I fear somebody throwing me into a grave? (I hope they do, and don't just leave me on top of the ground!)

**3. Hell is a place of torment. Revelation 14:9-11**

- It is said to be without mixture. This means it is undiluted wrath raining down.
- Some teach that there is a hell, but then you are simply annihilated when you get there.
- But the word “*tormented*” is the same word used in Matthew 8:5-6 to describe a person sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. It didn't say or mean “grievously annihilated.” There is some physical pain going on there.

**4. Hell is eternal.**

- Here are some phrases that Jesus used to describe hell - “*everlasting fire*” (Matthew 25:41,) “*everlasting punishment*” (Matthew 25:46,) “*eternal damnation*” (Mark 3:29)
- Paul called it “*everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.*” 2 Thessalonians 1:9
- The word everlasting is the Greek word “*ion.*” How long is this? Luke 1:31-33 uses this word, and defines it for us as “having no end.” It means forever.
- In Revelation 19:20, the antichrist and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire, and 1,000 years later, they are still there. Revelation 20:10
- Jesus constantly talked about hell and the fire that won't be quenched that will never go out.

**In Conclusion:**

1. As we have seen in God's Word, hell is a literal place with a literal geographic location. It is a literal place just like heaven is a literal place.
2. God has given to us very vivid descriptions of this place. It is a sobering subject, indeed, but we cannot bury our heads in the sand and act like it doesn't exist.
3. Today, we who are saved by God's grace have the wonderful message that God, in His love, has made a way out for every person on this earth. He sent His only begotten Son that we might have life eternal.
4. Jesus suffered our eternal judgment for us on the cross. The debt has been paid. Have you accepted it? Have you believed on Christ?
5. Hell was created for the devil and his angels, but if people choose to follow Satan's path of rebellion and spurn God's offer of eternal life through Christ, they will wind up in the same place as Satan.
6. God's heart is for you to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). Satan's heart is for you to be blinded from God's grace, God's love, and God's kindness - blinded from the all-sufficient work of Jesus Christ.