

Hell Is No Joke!

By Leon King

We hear the word "hell" being spewed from the mouths of infidels and unbelievers continuously. If one is ever around a television program, it seems they are ill content to let five minutes go by without the use of the word. These people never use this word according to the Biblical context or meaning - it is a byword with them. It is a joke with them. Maybe it is a joke with you, dear reader. Believe me, **hell is no joke!** I call a number of witnesses to help assure you that hell is a reality - that unbelieving people go there - that many unbelievers are there at this present hour - that they are awake, aware, remembering, tormented, and hopelessly lost forever!

1. The first witness. Korah and all his household went to hell and missed the graveyard. Korah was a Levite, but he wasn't satisfied with his station in life. Sound familiar? This is one of the great pitfalls of men. They are never satisfied with their lot in life even if they have to seek to change it by insurrection. Korah helped organize a rebellious group to stand against Moses, God's appointed leader. We read Korah's story in the 16th chapter of the Old Testament book of Numbers. We are told that God did a new thing with Korah to establish Moses' leadership in that day. Moses prayed to that end, and God heard and answered his prayer. I quote from Numbers 16:26-33:

And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall

*know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. **They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them:** and they perished from among the congregation.*

Korah and all that pertained to him went down alive into the pit - into the abyss - that is all except his children. We read in Numbers 26:9-11 that Korah's children didn't die in this remarkable tragedy.

And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not.

Since Korah went into Hell, which is in the heart of the earth, we believe he is still there with all that pertains to him. There is no indication in the Bible that Korah has been removed from that place.

2. The second witness. Jesus told a story about a certain rich man and a beggar.

The beggar's name was Lazarus, but the rich man is unnamed. Someone has suggested that the rich man's name was Dives (DI'-VEES), but I have found nothing in the Scriptures to substantiate that suggestion. We are told that the rich man died and was buried, then lifted up his eyes in hell being in torments in the flames. This story is found in the sixteenth chapter of Luke in the New Testament. Let us listen to the story and the words of the rich man from Luke 16:19-28.

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.

Like Korah, our first example, we believe the rich man is still in that awful place of torment and despair never to be removed until God convenes

the Great White Throne judgment in the future. Then all unbelievers will be brought out of that place for a judgment for the works done in their body. If Korah and the rich man could speak to you today, dear friend, they would loudly warn you to "flee from the wrath to come."

There are a number of things they would surely tell you, so I want to list some of them.

1. They would tell you that hell is a real place, where real people like yourself who are unbelievers go when they die.
2. They would tell you that hell is a place of flames where the torment is real and continuing, yet one is never consumed.
3. They would tell you that you will be awake, aware, remembering and regretting every moment in that place prepared for the Devil and his angels.
4. They would tell you that you will suddenly understand the great need to warn your loved ones to repent of their sins and turn to Jesus Christ as their Savior so they would never come to that place. The rich man wanted Lazarus to go back and tell his five brothers.
5. They would tell you that there is no hope for you to join those who are believers and are being comforted while you are tormented.
6. They would tell you to listen to those who preach the word of God in its completeness - and to repent (change your mind - about yourself, about your sin, about God, and about all others about you), and believe the Gospel message.

A man stood up in a Bible Study time and said, "I don't believe in a burning hell where people are not consumed and where it just keeps on burning and burning." His statement sounds much like the modernistic,

agnostic, gainsaying seminary professors who teach men there is no such thing as a burning hell. Let us see what is taught in Scripture.

Hell in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the word "sheol" is derived from a root-word meaning "to ask or demand" thus showing that hell is insatiable. It is never full. The various translations of the word all point to the abode of the dead. The word grave is used, the term: "the abode of the wicked," and "of the good." It is also used to denote "deep," "dark," "with bars." The dead "go down" to it. In the Old Testament time, before Jesus Christ died on the cross, both good and bad people were in hell after they died, but they were separated. The good were comforted while the evil ones were tormented. This is clear from the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. Now follow me as I list these things showing the Scriptures that speak of the various aspects.

a. Hell is the place of the congregation of the dead.

The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead. -- Proverbs 21:16.

b. Hell is the abode of the wicked.

They (wicked Korah), and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. -- Numbers 16:33.

"Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned. The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree. -- Job 24:19-20.

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. -- Psalms 9:17.

Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. -- Psalms 31:17.

c. Hell was the abode of the righteous until Christ died and led them out.

This can be grossly misunderstood. The righteous dead were separated from the wicked dead until the Lord lead them out on high.

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. -- Psalms 16:10.

O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. -- Psalms 30:3.

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah. -- Psalms 49:15.

For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. -- Psalms 86:13.

d. Hell is said to be "deep."

It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? -- Job 11:8.

e. Hell is said to be "dark."

Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the

shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness. -- Job 10:21-22.

f. Hell is said to be "with bars."

They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust. -- Job 17:16.

g. The dead are said to "go down" to it.

But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation." -- Numbers 16:30-33.

Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth. They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen. -- Ezekiel 31:15-17.

Hell in the New Testament

The Greek words "hades," "gehenna," and "tartaroo" are translated hell in the New Testament. All three words with their various exact meanings all point to the unspeakable miseries of the unsaved who go there. It is a place of darkness with gates, bars and locks. It is a place of fire which shall never be quenched. It is a place prepared for the devil and his angels. As we have already mentioned, the Lord Jesus Christ went down into the earth and led "captivity captive and ascended on high." After he had removed the sins of His people through the sacrifice of himself, He led them to the presence of the Father in heaven. Let's notice a section of Ephesians 4:

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) -- Ephesians 4:8-10.

The unsaved dead from Adam onward are still there. When an unsaved man dies today, he immediately goes to hell and will remain there until the great judgment day. When one of God's children dies, he immediately goes to be with the Lord in heaven there to ever be with the Lord.

Hell is no joke!! Here are some of the New Testament passages about hell.

a. Hell is a prison.

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; -- 1 Peter 3:19.

b. Hell has gates and locks.

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.

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. --

Revelation 1:18.

c. Hell is downward.

*And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. -- **Matthew 11:23.***

*And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. -- **Luke 10:15.***

d. Hell is the place of the miserable damned.

*Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? -- **Matthew 23:33.***

*But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. -- **Matthew 8:12.***

*The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. -- **Matthew 13:41-42.***

Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. -- Matthew 22:13.

And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. -- Mark 9:42-48.

e. Hell is a place where both it and its inhabitants will be thrown into the lake of fire.

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

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.

Dear reader, my earnest prayer and heart's desire for you is that you have the assurance that your name is written in the book of life of the Lamb of God. If your name is not there, you will come to the sudden and everlasting realization that hell is no joke!!

Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. – Luke 14:46,47.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. – John 5:24.