

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
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**WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES AND
WE BELIEVE ABOUT HELL**

LUKE 16:19-26

Again, this morning we are going to look at the same scripture passage as we spoke from last Sunday. Here we have two real men who both died, and one went to heaven and the other went to the devil's hell. You need to remember that hell is more than a four-letter cuss word, it is a real place of torment according to what Jesus and the Bible says. You don't hear much about this subject, but Jesus spoke more about Hell than He did about Heaven.

Hell is a subject that we 21st century Christians don't talk much about anymore. It seems so medieval. It makes God appear mean and sadistic. After all who tortures people these days other than serial killers, terrorists, and the CIA? Frankly, hell is a subject we don't want to think about, much less verbalize in a skeptical world.

Rob Bell, rock star preacher of the evangelical world, has been making news lately with his book, **Love Wins**. Bells appears to promote universalism in the book (the belief that all will eventually be saved).

People have some really crazy ideas about the place we call Hell. Let me just give you a sampling of what some of the cults teach about Hell.

Scientology, The Mormons, The Jehovah's Witnesses. So, what is Hell?

There are today five common views of Hell.

1. First there is **Denial**.
2. Secondly, some believe that *Hell speaks of earthly suffering*.
3. Third, there is belief that *Hell is annihilation*.
4. Fourth, is the belief in restoration or universalism this is the belief that *everyone will ultimately be saved*.
5. Fifth, the only model supported by Scripture, is the belief that Hell is **real place of unending torment**.

The story that Jesus told in Luke 16 is the story of the lives, deaths, and destinies of two men. As both men died and passed through death's portal, an amazing reversal in their situations occurred.

As we look at Luke 16 again, I want to share three important things that this passage tells us about Hell.

I. FIRST, HELL IS A PLACE OF MISERY vv. 23-24

The rich man is said to be in "**torment**" (v. 23). He begged for even the smallest amount of water to relieve his suffering (v. 24). In **Matthew 25:30** Jesus describes Hell as a place of "... *outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*"

II. SECONDLY, HELL IS A PLACE OF MEMORY v. 25

Beyond the fact that Hell is a place of conscious misery we also see that it is a place of memory and profound regret. In verse 25 Abraham said, "Son remember..." It is impossible to forget when you're in Hell. The rich man could not take his money, but he did take his memory.

III. HELL IS A PLACE OF MOURNING vv. 27-31

We don't see the rich man reveling in fellowship with his friends. He is very much alone. He did not say, "I'm glad my brothers are going to be joining me here. We are going to have a wonderful time together." Hell will not be at all like it is often characterized, as a giant lounge where between drinks people can recount their escapades on Earth.

Let me summarize what we can learn about the afterlife from Luke 16.

1. ***The dead are still alive.*** Both Lazarus and the rich man survived their own funerals.
2. ***The dead retain their personalities and their essential character.*** Lazarus is still Lazarus, and the rich man is still the rich man.
3. ***Death marks the final separation between the saved and the lost.***
4. ***Hell is real but you don't have to go!***

Hell can be avoided if a person listens to God's word and repents.

Jesus said in **Matthew 25:41**, "**Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.**" Hell was designed for Satan and his demons, not people. The Door Of Heaven is open to whosoever will as Jesus said in **John 3:16-21**. "**God is not will that any should perish**" (2 Peter 3:9).

Where will you spend eternity? Will it be in Heaven because your faith is in Christ and Christ alone, or will it be that place designed and dedicated for the devil and his angels, that place called Hell. May God speak to each of our hearts through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. Let's Pray.