



The Unsolved Mystery of Hell

Truth about eternal death

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In the fall of 1988 a television series debuted that focused on lost loves, UFO sightings, fugitives and homicides. “Unsolved Mysteries” was hosted by a trench coat clad Robert Stack and was an instant hit. By the end of its eighth season, it was responsible for 87 reunions, capturing 140 criminals, and solving over 300 cases.

One unsolved mystery that would interest even the late Robert Stack is the subject of “hell.” The Scriptural understanding of such a place is very different than the notion of everlasting flames as seen in the literary classic “Dante’s Inferno.”

Hell is referenced in the Old Testament with the rebellion of Korah against Moses in Numbers 16. The Bible actually says, “the earth beneath them opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses and all the men who were with Korah and all their property. They and all they possessed descended alive into Sheol.”

The Ancient Hebrew word “Sheol” literally means the “underworld of the dead.” The term speaks of an abode, thought to be deep within the earth (Psalms 88:6, Amos 9:2). Strong’s Exhaustive Dictionary calls it a “subterranean retreat, grave, hell, or pit.”

Korah rebelled and was swallowed alive by sheol/hell. The same is true for those who rebel against the Almighty’s Law today. Romans 6:23 states that the “wages of sin is death.” Spiritual death is separation from the Creator, which comes as a result of a lifestyle of sin.

The New Testament calls “hell” a place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth” where the “worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.” In the Bible, the word most often translated as “Hell” is derived from the Greek word “gehenna” or the “valley of Hinnom.” The Messiah often referenced “gehenna” as He spoke about the eventual punishment for the wicked. His listeners understood exactly what and where He was referencing. The valley of Hinnah was the trash dump for the nation

of Israel. In GeHinnom there was constant burning of waste, dead bodies, and trash until the items were totally consumed. GeHinnom is a picturesque term used to describe the harshest of conditions for those who do not accept the gift of eternal life. Perhaps the only thing worse than eternal burning is being totally annihilated like burnt trash?

The Bible teaches that only those people who are “born again” will inherit eternal “life.” All others will experience eternal “death” and cease to exist. This is worse than eternal burning! There will come a time when the lost souls will be annihilated. This is called the “Second Death” and is referenced throughout the book of Revelation.

Ezekiel 18:20 enforces this idea, “The soul who sins is the one who will die.” In Matthew 10:28 the Messiah said, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can *destroy* both soul and body in hell.”

Finally, in John 3:16 the Greek word used for “perish” illustrates this point clearly. The verse says, “For God so loved the world that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life.” This Greek word translated “perish” literally means “to destroy, put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end, to kill.” The idea of eternal punishment is not supported by the most popular Evangelistic verse! Those who do not accept the Messiah will face a time of torment in Hell/Sheol/GeHinnom and will then be utterly destroyed along with Hell itself. Mystery Solved. Hell exposed. Robert Stack would be proud.