

I Went to Hell

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By Kenneth E. Hagin

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Chapter 1

The Church Member Who Went to Hell

I was born and raised Southern Baptist.

I thought the Lord Jesus Christ and all of His disciples were Southern Baptist. It came as a real shock to me when I found out that they weren't.

I got to reading the Bible one day and decided that Paul couldn't have been Baptist, because he said, "*I thank my God I speak with tongues*" (1 Cor. 14:18). I had never heard any Baptist say that!

Being born and raised Southern Baptist, I felt sorry for everybody who wasn't Baptist. But, you know, friends, you can be a church member and not be a Christian.

Even though I'm a member of a church and believe in going to church, just going to church won't save you or make you a Christian any more than going to the barn will make you a cow! Being a member of a church won't make you a Christian any more than being a member of a country club will make you a Christian. You have to be born again.

We've got too many people who think they're a Christian just because they're a member of a church.

I joined the church when I was 9 years old. The reason I joined was because my Sunday School teacher said to all of us boys one Sunday morning, "How many of you want to go to heaven?" Well, every one of us wanted to go to heaven. So the Sunday School teacher said, "When the pastor, Dr.

So-and-so, gives the invitation this morning, you just go down to

the front."

Since we all wanted to go to heaven, when the invitation was given, several of us marched right down to the front and shook hands with the preacher. We joined the church and were baptized in water. And I really, actually, thought I was a Christian.

Later when I got into an evangelistic-type service—even one sponsored by my own church—and the Spirit of God began to deal with me about being saved, I'd say to myself, *I'm already saved. I belong to the church. I've been baptized in water. I'm already a Christian.*

I was born prematurely with a deformed heart. I weighed less than two pounds at birth. In my day, more than 75 years ago, they didn't have incubators to put premature babies in, so the possibility of my living was practically nil. Nevertheless, I did survive, but I never ran and played like other little children. I never had a normal childhood.

When I was 15 years old, I became totally bedfast. Five doctors said I had to die; I couldn't live. But it was there, on the bed of sickness, that I was born again on the 22nd day of April 1933 in the south bedroom of 405 N. College Street in the city of McKinney, Texas. It was 20 minutes till 8 o'clock on a Saturday night.

This south bedroom had a fireplace.

Grandpa had a clock on the mantelpiece.

My mother, grandmother, and youngest brother, Pat, were sitting there in the room with me, for I had taken a turn for the worse. The doctor had been called.

(Remember, in 1933, doctors made house calls.)

Just as Grandpa's clock struck 7:30, my heart stopped beating within my bosom.

And I could feel, faster than you could snap your fingers, the blood cease to circulate way down at the end of my toes.

My toes seemed to go numb. This numbness spread to my feet, my ankles, my knees, my hips, my stomach, my heart—and I *leaped* out of my body.

I did not lose consciousness; I leaped out of my body like a diver would leap off of a diving board into a swimming pool. I knew I was outside of my body. I could see my family in the room, but I couldn't contact them.

I had it in my mind to say goodbye to Momma, Granny, and my little brother, but I leaped out of my body before I could get the words out fully.

I began to descend—down, down, into a pit, like you'd go down into a well, cavern, or cave. I did not know that my physical voice picked that up. As I was trying to say goodbye, I knew I was going down into that place. All three of my family members who were present testified later, "When you said goodbye, your voice sounded like you were way down in a cave or cavern or something."

And I continued to descend. I went down feet first—down, down, down, down. I could look up and see the lights of the earth.

They finally faded away. Darkness encompassed me 'round about—darkness that is blacker than any night man has ever seen. It seemed that if you had a knife, you could cut a chunk of it out. You couldn't see your hand if it was one inch in front of your nose.

The farther down I went, the darker it became—and the hotter it became—until finally, way down beneath me, I could see fingers of light playing on the wall of darkness. And I came to the bottom of the pit.

This happened to me more than 60 years ago, yet it's just as real to me as if it had happened week before last. Spiritual things never grow old.

When I came to the bottom of the pit, I saw what caused the fingers of light to play on the wall of darkness. Out in front of me, beyond the gates or the entrance into hell, I saw giant, great orange flames with a white crest.

I was pulled toward hell just like a magnet pulls metal unto itself. I knew that once I entered through those gates, I could not come back. I endeavored to slow down my descent, because when I came to the bottom of the pit, there still was a slant downward.

I was conscious of the fact that some kind of a creature met me at the bottom of that pit. I didn't look at it. My gaze was riveted on the gates, yet I knew that a creature was there by my right side.

I didn't know until a good many years later, when I discovered it in the Book of Isaiah, that the Bible says, "*Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee* " (Isa. 14.9).

That creature, when I endeavored to slow down my descent, took me by the arm to escort me in. When he did, away above the blackness and the darkness a voice spoke. It sounded like a male voice, but I don't know what he said. I don't know whether it was God, Jesus, an angel, or who. He did not speak in the English language; it was a foreign language.

That place just shook at the few words he spoke! And the creature took his hand off of my arm. There was a power like a suction to my back parts that pulled me back. I floated away from the entrance to hell until I stood in the shadows. Then, like a suction from above, I floated up, headfirst, through the darkness.

Before I got to the top, I could see the light. I've been down in a well; it was like you were way down in a well and could see the light up above.

I came up on the porch of my Grandpa's house. We lived in one of those old-fashioned houses they used to build down in Texas with a porch nearly all the way around the house. I came up on the south side of the house. I could see Grandpa's porch swing there. I could see the giant cedar trees in the yard. I stood there on the porch just for a second.

Then I went right through the wall—not through the door, and not through the window—through the wall, and seemed to leap inside my body like a man would slip his foot inside his boot in the morning time.

Before I leaped inside my body, I could see my grandmother sitting on the edge of the bed holding me in her arms. When I got inside of my body, I could communicate with her.

I said to her—and I don't know how I knew it—"Granny, I'm going again, and I won't be back."

She said, "Son, I thought you weren't coming back that time!"

I said, "Granny, where's Momma? I want to tell her goodbye."

I looked around the room; she wasn't there.

She said, "Son, I told your mother you were gone, and she rushed out the door, praying."

And then I heard her. She was over on the north side of the house. She came back around the porch, praying at the top of her voice.

People told me later that they could hear her crying and praying for blocks around.

When I said, "I want to tell Momma goodbye," my grandmother called to her:

"Lillie!" but she couldn't make her hear her, because Momma was praying so loud.

If you're not ready to go, you want somebody with you. You're afraid! I said, "Granny, don't leave me! Don't leave me!"

I'm afraid I'll go while you're gone! I want somebody with me! Don't leave me!"

And so she gathered me in her arms again.

And I said, "Tell Momma I said goodbye.

Tell Momma I love her. Tell Momma I appreciate her staying with us." (My daddy forsook us when I was 6 years of age, and Momma was left with four children to endeavor to make a living for. With all the trouble she had had, and being just a baby Christian and not knowing how to cast her burden upon the Lord, she had had a complete nervous, mental, and physical breakdown.)

And I said, "Tell Momma I appreciate everything she has ever done for me and for all of us. And you tell Momma that I said if I've ever put a wrinkle in her face or a gray hair in her head, I'm sorry. And I ask her to forgive me."

I felt myself slipping. I said, "Granny, I'm going again. You've been a second mother to me when Momma's health failed."

We four children went to live with different kinfolk when our mother became ill. I went to live with my grandmother on my mother's side of the family. My grandmother used to always call me "my boy," and she'd always say, "Kiss me right there—kiss me right there."

So I kissed her on the cheek and said goodbye.

My heart stopped for the second time.

It's almost as real to me today, over half a century later, as it was that day.

I could feel the blood cease to circulate.

The tips of my toes went numb—then my feet, ankles, knees, hips, stomach, and heart. I leaped out of my body and began to descend: down, down, down, down. Oh, I know it was just a few seconds, but it seemed like an eternity.

Down, until the darkness encompassed me 'round about. The

lights above faded away. The farther down I went, the hotter and darker it became, until I came again to the bottom of the pit and saw the entrance to hell, or the gates, as I call it. I was conscious that that creature met me.

I endeavored to slow down my descent—it seemed like I was floating down—yet it seemed like there was a pull that pulled me downward. And that creature took me by the arm. When he did, that voice spoke again—a man's voice. It was a foreign tongue. I don't know what he said, but when he spoke, that whole place just shook. That creature took his hand off of my arm.

It was like a suction to my back. I never turned around; I just came floating back into the shadows of darkness. And then I was pulled up, headfirst. I could see the lights of the earth above me before I came up out of the pit. The only difference this time was that I came up at the foot of the bed.

The first time I had come up on the porch. This time I came up at the foot of the bed. For just a second I stood there. I could see my body lying there on the bed. I could see Grandma as she sat there holding me in her arms. I seemed to leap from the foot of the bed inside my body through my mouth.

When I got back inside my body, I could communicate with Granny. I said, "Granny, I'm going again, and I won't be back this time."

She said again, "Son, I thought you weren't coming back that time."

I said, "Granny, where is Grandpa? I want to tell Grandpa goodbye."

She said, "Son, you know your Granddad went down to the east part of town to collect rent off of some of his rent houses."

"Oh," I said, "I remember that now. I just forgot momentarily."

I said, "Granny, tell Grandpa goodbye."

I've never known what it means to have a daddy. He's been the nearest to a daddy I've known. He gave me a home when I had none. Tell him I appreciate him. Tell him I love him. Tell Grandpa that I said goodbye."

Then I left a word for my only sister, the oldest child, and my oldest brother, and then I said, "Where's Pat?" Pat was my little brother, 9 years old.

Granny said, "Well, he ran next door and called the doctor

again."

I left a word for each one of them, and my heart stopped for the third time.

I could feel the circulation as it cut off.

Suddenly my toes went numb. Faster than you can snap your fingers, my toes, feet, ankles, knees, hips, stomach, and heart went dead—and I leaped out of my body and began to descend.

Until this time, I thought, This is not happening to me. This is just a hallucination. It can't be real!

But then I thought, *This is the third time. I won't come back this time!* Darkness encompassed me 'round about, darker than any night man has ever seen. The Bible talks about men and women being cast into "outer darkness," where there is "*weeping and gnashing of teeth*" (Matt. 8:12).

And in the darkness, I cried out, "God! I belong to the church! I've been baptized in water!" (You see, I was telling Him, "I shouldn't be going this direction; I'm going the wrong direction!")

I waited for an answer, but there was no answer; only the echo of my own voice through the darkness. And the second time I cried a little louder, "God! I belong to the church! I've been baptized in water!"

I waited for an answer, but there was no answer; only the echo of my own voice as it echoed through the darkness.

I would scare a congregation out of their wits if I ever imitated the way I screamed the third time, although if I could scare them out of hell and into heaven, I'd do it.

I'd flat do it!

I literally screamed, "GOD! GOD! I BELONG TO THE CHURCH! I'VE BEEN BAPTIZED IN WATER!" But you see, although being baptized in water is right, although belonging to the church is right, *it takes more than belonging to the church and more than being baptized in water to miss hell and go to heaven!*

And all I heard was the echo of my own voice as it echoed through the darkness.

I came again to the bottom of that pit.

Again I could feel the heat as it beat me in the face. Again I approached the entrance, the gates into hell itself. That creature took me by the arm. I intended to put up a fight, if I

could, to keep from going in. I only managed to slow down my descent just a little, and he took me by the arm.

Thank God that voice spoke. I don't know who it was—I didn't see anybody—I just heard the voice. I don't know what he said, but whatever he said, that place shook; it just trembled. And that creature took his hand off my arm.

It was just like there was a suction to my back parts. It pulled me back, away from the entrance to hell, until I stood in the shadows. Then it pulled me up headfirst.

As I was going up through the darkness, I began to pray. My spirit, the man who lives inside this physical body, is an eternal being; a spirit man. I began to pray, "O God!

I come to You in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask You to forgive me of my sins and to cleanse me from all sin."

I came up beside the bed. The difference between the three experiences was that I came up on the porch the first time; I came up at the foot of the bed the second time; and I came up right beside the bed the third time and leaped right inside my body.

When I got inside my body, my physical voice picked up my prayer right in the middle of the sentence. I was already praying out of my spirit; my physical voice picked up my prayer and continued to pray.

Now, this happened in 1933. We didn't have all the automobiles in 1933 that we have today; it was the Depression! But they tell me between me and Momma praying so loud traffic was blocked up for two blocks on either side of our house.

I want you to know that it was just like a two-ton weight lifted off of my chest.

Peace came on the inside. I looked at Grandpa's old clock on the mantelpiece, and it said 20 minutes till 8 o'clock. All of that happened in 10 minutes!

So I was born again at 20 minutes till 8 o'clock on April 22, 1933 in the south bedroom, and I've been saved ever since.

I still was bedfast, and the doctor said that I had to die. In fact, five doctors said that I had to die. One of them had practiced at the great Mayo Clinic. He said, "You don't even have one chance in a million," so I thought I had to die.

But I'll tell you what I did: I praised myself to sleep every night. All the lights would be out in the house; everybody would be in

bed. I'd be left alone, just a boy of 15, with my own thoughts.

The doctor had squared with me. He said, "You know, the condition your heart is in, you could die at any moment. Somebody could be in the room with you, look out the window for a second, then look back at you and you'd be gone without a sound. Or they may find you dead in bed some morning."

I said, "They may find me dead in bed in the morning, but, oh, I'm so glad that I didn't go to hell!"

At night, I'd start saying quietly to myself, "Thank You, Jesus. Glory to God.

Praise the Lord. I'm going to put a smile on my face. If they find me dead with a smile on my face, they'll know that I died happy!"

Chapter 2

Death and the Glory Cloud

I was bedfast 16 months before I was healed. Four months after I was born again, the 16th day of August 1933, just four days before my 16th birthday—it was on a Wednesday—I was dying. Now, I knew all that day I was dying. I'd had too much experience with dying not to know.

They had moved me to the north bedroom. My little brother, 9 years old, was there by me, because somebody had to be with me all the time. I was very low.

The temperature got to be 106 that day.

We didn't have any air-conditioning in 1933.

If people had anything, they just had a fan to blow a little air around, but we didn't even have a fan.

The doors and windows were all open, yet my body was so cold. By 1 o'clock the temperature was already over 100—it reached its highest peak of 106 about 3 o'clock—yet my body was so cold they wrapped me in blankets. They got out all the hot water bottles, heated bricks, wrapped them, and put them around me, trying to warm me up.

At 1:30 in the afternoon on August 16, 1933, death came and fastened itself upon me. I said to my little brother, "Run and get Momma—quick! I want to tell her goodbye."

He rushed out of the room. And when he did, the whole room lit up with the glory of God. (The Bible says in the 7th chapter of Acts that when Stephen was stoned to death, he saw the glory

of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. If one goes back through the Old Testament and studies about the glory of God, you'll find it appeared many times as a cloud—white, bright, and glistening.)

The whole room filled up with that bright light, brighter than the sun shining on snow, and you know how dazzling that is.

And I went up into that glory. I left my body and ascended. I got up about where the top of the house should be, looked back down into the room, and saw my body lying there on the bed, my eyes set and my mouth open in death.

I saw my mother stoop over me and take my hand in hers. And I heard a voice speak in the English language—I didn't see anything. I always thought it was Jesus, because it was a man's voice. He said, "Go back! Go back! Go back to the earth! Your work is not done!"

I descended and came back down into the room. As I slipped back inside my body, I said to Momma, as she held my hand in hers, "Momma! I'm not going to die now!"

She thought I meant that I wasn't going to die at that moment. I meant that I wasn't going to die at all then—I was going to live my life out and do the work of God. (It was a year later that I was healed as I acted upon God's Word in faith.)

When you get over in eternity, there's no such thing as time. For many years I never told about these experiences. To me they were too sacred to talk about. But after I had been in the ministry about 15 years—I started out as a Baptist boy preacher—the Lord began to say to me, "Tell them!" So I began to do what He said to do.

My mother had heard me tell about going to hell, but she had never heard me describe this other experience of going up in the glory. Shortly before she went to be with the Lord at 80 years of age, she was listening to me teach one day on the radio. I was teaching on "What It Means To Believe With the Heart," talking about the inward man and the outward man, and saying that to believe with the heart means to believe with your spirit—that man on the inside. To illustrate this teaching, I related this experience with the glory.

The next time I visited my mother, she said, "Son, I never heard that before until I heard you give it on the radio. But," she added, "there's more to that than you know.

Let me tell you my side and Granny's side."

She continued, "The way you tell it, you were up there in that

glory maybe a few seconds. But it was more than 10 minutes that you were gone."

She said, "Pat came running back to the kitchen and said, 'Momma! Momma!

Granny! Granny! Ken's dying! Ken's dying!'" I was the closest to your room, and I rushed out of the kitchen, up the hall, into the dining room, and started into the bedroom, but I couldn't get in!

"The door was open, but I couldn't get in. The room seemed to be full of something.

I sensed the presence of God—His glory—so I backed up by the dining room table and bowed my head to pray." (Momma couldn't see inside because she had been blind since I was a small boy.)

Granny Drake's account (she was 70 years of age then) was that she came running behind Momma. She tried to run through that glory and bounced off of it like you'd bounce off of a rubber ball. Then she backed up halfway across the dining room and made another run at it, and bounced off again. She backed all the way across the dining room, backed up against the wall, ran across the room, and couldn't get through the open door.

"Then she was almost overcome, so she hung onto the door frame and said, 'Why, Lillie, I can't see! The room is filled with something like a fog or a white cloud! I can't see the bed. I can't see Kenneth. I can't see into the room, and I can't get in there!'"

Momma continued, "I told her, 'We'd better just wait.' I stood there with my head bowed, praying, for 10 minutes by that open door, yet your Granny still couldn't see into the room. Finally she said, 'Lillie, it's lifting—the cloud's lifting.'

"It was like a fog going away. She could see a little bit into the room, and then a little bit more. But we didn't dare go in until the last wisp was gone."

Granny could see it with her physical eyes. She was standing at the door. And when she said, "It's all gone," Momma rushed into the room.

She said, "I stooped over you and took your hand in mine, and you were gone.

About that time you said, 'Momma! I'm not going to die now.' "

From that day to this, I've never felt sorry for Christians who die, whether they're young, middle aged, or old. Yes, I know healing belongs to us, but we're all going home sometime. I've

never felt sorry for them, because I know where they went.

But, oh, it's another story for those who don't know the Lord!

Chapter 3

Dying Without God

I remember when I was there on the bed of sickness, my grandmother had a distant cousin who would come to visit her. Their forebears had all come from Tennessee to settle up Texas years before. After nearly 40 years, they discovered that here were two cousins living within 30 miles of one another. This cousin lived in Sherman, Texas, so she'd come down and visit us maybe once every three months.

But you didn't dare talk to her about God. Her daughter would have to get her out of my room. She'd get to raving, "*The very idea!* I'll tell you—these preachers, trying to scare people, telling them there's a hell and a heaven! Why, when a person dies, they're dead just like a dog! Every church ought to be closed down and bombed! Every preacher ought to be killed! They're just in it for the money."

After I had been preaching for many years, my wife and I were in Sherman visiting her parents. Mr. Rooker said, "Kenneth, you remember L.?"

"Yes," I said.

"Well, her husband saw me and said, 'If Kenneth and Oretha come, we want them to come and visit us. Her mother is on her death bed, the doctors say.'"

So my wife and I went to their home. A woman came to the door, and I recognized she was the daughter, although I hadn't seen her for about 12 years.

I said, "I'm Kenneth Hagin."

She said, "Oh, you're Lillie's boy! You're the one who made the preacher?"

"Yes," I said. "That's right."

She grabbed my hand and began to cry.

She said, "Kenneth, you remember Momma.

You remember how she was. You couldn't talk to her about God."

I said, "I remember."

She said, "Would you talk to her? She's in the bedroom there on a hospital bed. The doctor left just a few minutes ago. He said she's dying. Will you talk to her?"

I said, "I will, L., if I can."

She took me by the hand and led me to a back bedroom. She opened the door, and we stepped up to a hospital bed. And here was this woman some 72 years old. The hospital bed was cranked up, and she was lying in a half-seated position.

Her mouth was open. Her eyes were open. They looked like marbles. There was a death rattle in her throat.

L. took her mother by the hand and said, "MOMMA!" Her eyes never moved.

They were set, glassy, like marbles. Her mouth never moved. It was open. There was a rattle in her throat. She breathed once in a while.

"MOMMA!" No answer.

"MOMMA!" No answer.

The daughter leaned down to her ear and called a little louder. "MOMMA!" I was standing right beside her, stooped over.

Those lips, those eyes never moved, and they never shut. They were wide open. Then the lips began to move just a little, and from somewhere down inside, a voice said, "Yeah? Yeah?"

"MOMMA! Do you know who this is?"

"Yeah. It's my baby." (It *was* her baby, although I guess the daughter was 50 years old.)

She said, "MOMMA! There's somebody here to see you." There was a faint gurgle in response.

She said "MOMMA! You remember Aunt Sally down in McKinney? You remember her daughter Lillie? You remember her son that was on the bed—Kenneth—the one that made a preacher?"

When she said the word "preacher," her mother jumped like somebody had shot her—yet her eyes never moved. She reached up and said, "Kenneth, Kenneth! Where are you? Where are you?"

I took her hand, and she said, "Oh, Kenneth, Kenneth! You're a preacher—tell me there is no hell! Oh, tell me! I said there wasn't any hell. I said there wasn't any. I said every preacher

ought to be killed. I'm afraid! Oh, I'm afraid! I'm afraid!

"It's so dark. It's so dark. IT'S SO DARK! IT'S SO DARK! It's ..."
And she fell back on the pillow. We couldn't get through to her.

And she died and went to hell, crying, "It's so dark! It's so dark!"

Men and women, boys and girls, young men and young women:
There *is* a heaven to gain and there *is* a hell to shun. This may seem old-fashioned to some, but the old-fashioned Gospel is still true today.

A Sinner's Prayer to Receive Jesus as Savior

Dear Heavenly Father ...

I come to You in the Name of Jesus.

Your Word says, "... *him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*" (John 6:37), so I know You won't cast me out, but You take me in and I thank you for it.

You said in Your Word, "*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*"

(Rom. 10:13). I am calling on Your name, so I know You have saved me now.

You also said "*if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*"

(Rom. 10:9,10). I believe in my heart Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe that He was raised from the dead for my justification, and I confess Him now as my Lord. Because Your Word says, "... *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness* . . . "

and I do believe with my heart, I have now become the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21)... And I am saved!

Thank You Lord!

Signed _____

Date _____

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