



HEAVEN AND HELL

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“Heaven” – August 9, 2021

In our Wonderful Day in the Lord, we are going to look at the issues about heaven. We have been looking at the book of Revelation for a long time and we looked at the information the Lord gives us about the future and heaven and the eternal kingdom. Those are very important things we have looked at and we are going to look at it a little deeper now and go back and look at questions people have in their minds. I occasionally receive questions along this line and perhaps our series together will answer some of those questions for you. If we don't, maybe you can send me some emails, and we can look at some other questions. We will spend at least ten lessons on this, so hopefully we will cover most things.

We are going to answer the question of: What is Heaven Like?

I want to begin with 2 Corinthians 12:2, to discuss even the subject of heaven. Paul says, “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven.”

In ancient times, the world saw the heavens in three different categories:

1. First heaven

There was the atmospheric heaven, the heaven around us, the atmosphere perhaps including the moon and the sun. That would be part of our immediate atmosphere.

2. Second heaven

This would be the stars and the planets, far beyond us that of course the ancient world saw and studied at great length. That would basically be the universe as we understand it.

3. Third heaven.

The heaven that Paul is talking about here is a different kind of heaven. It's a heaven in which we understand as the centralized abode of God. It is not a physical place.

I remember decades ago when the Russian cosmonauts went up in their first flights to outer space, they declared that there is no God. They didn't run into Him. So, as they went up above our atmosphere, they declared that there is no God out there, and they didn't see Him anywhere. Of course, they didn't because there is no physical, spatial heaven that they would have run into, and they would not have run into God for that matter because God is a spirit. So, the third heaven is the abode of God. Of course, God is beyond all measurements. He does not need a physical place to be, but Scripture speaks of Him as being in heaven in this sense.

Now, what is that like? We get a little picture of that back in Revelation 21:1 where it says, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven." Eventually, ultimately, we come to a place where we do need a physical heaven and a physical earth because we now have physical beings living eternally. So, now we have a new heaven and a new earth for that very purpose. What we are looking at now is something different from what we are experiencing at the present which has a third heaven that is not physical, but the Lord is going to create a physical heaven and a physical earth upon which physical beings, such as us—His people, will dwell forever.

So, that is what we know right now. Heaven is not a physical place, but one day the Lord will create a heaven that will be physical, and we will live there forever.

We are going to look at this a little bit more next time and see what that looks like.

“Heaven – Where We Will Live Forever” – August 10, 2021

As we are looking at heaven and our eternal abode, what we are going to answer today is: Where will we live forever? That is a subject that has come up a lot lately. Some have gotten a little bit testy about this. There have been a lot of books and articles in recent times telling us that we will not live in heaven for eternity. The books say that we will live on the earth, and we should quit talking so much about going to heaven when we die. It's almost like let's not worry about heaven because after all we are going to live on the earth forever and so let's talk about that. Too many Christians, according to these particular authors, just want to get out of this place and get to heaven where it is obviously a much better place to be. So, they see that as escapism.

Let's look at some of this. Some of it is true and some of it is untrue. The true part is this: We are going to live on the earth forever. It talks about that in Revelation 21:2 when he says, "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.'" So, we have a picture here of the new Jerusalem which I believe will be our primary abode in eternity, coming down out of heaven to the earth and it will rest on the earth and be on the earth forever. So, in the big picture, these people who are concerned about these things are right. We will live on the new earth forever. So, that will be where we are.

On the other hand, if I die before the Lord returns, I want to go to heaven, don't you? We think back throughout the centuries of Christians who have been dying for hundreds and hundreds of years. Where does our spirit go before Christ returns and we are resurrected? The spirit goes to heaven. I'm quite interested in heaven, and I want to know as much as I can about heaven. When I die, if the Lord has not returned first, that is where I will be, and I want to know something about that.

However, part of the catalyst behind the idea that we are going to live on the earth forever flows back to the issue of taking care of the planet. Some

are basically saying, we need to take care of this planet. We need to be in the ecology movement in which we are taking care of this planet. We are not going to ruin it. We are going to tend it. We are not going to use fossil fuels. We are going to be concerned about the green issues and so forth. Those are important things, so here is what we should think about. The Lord put Adam and Eve in the garden to tend it. That has never really been rescinded in that sense. The Lord is not saying we should not take care of the planet. We should be good caretakers of what God has created. We should not do things to the planet that harm it. We should be concerned about that, but not so that when the Lord comes back that He finds Himself a wonderful planet to plant His eternal city on. The scriptures talk here about the fact that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Peter tells us in 2 Peter that the earth as we know it will be burned up and destroyed with intense heat. So, this planet as we know it now will be gone and a new one will replace it. Some, even in our conservative camps, believe that the present earth will still exist, but it will be refurbished or regenerated and the earth as we know it today will be vastly, vastly different. So, even if you take that view, the ecology movement in which we are taking care of the planet so that it is ready for the Lord to return to, doesn't make a lot of sense. The Lord is going to give us a new heaven and a new earth and we are going to dwell on that new earth that the Lord has put here for us. Our basic home is going to be the new Jerusalem. Again, we do not know exactly what that looks like. We see a gigantic city that is described here that will be our place of operation. That doesn't mean that we will not be able to go beyond the new Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, although we don't have a lot of revelation on it, most theologians believe we will have a body much like Jesus had after the resurrection. A glorified body that is able to come and go and perhaps travel in a moment's notice or just immediately. Hopefully we will be able to travel the planet and maybe even other portions of the universe almost immediately. That would be a wonderful thing, wouldn't it? I look forward to that, and I hope that takes place, but we are not given a lot of revelation on that. What we do know is that we will live on this planet in a glorified, beautiful, perfect place known as the new earth in the new Jerusalem.

So, that will be our abode in eternity. When we die, right now, our spirit goes to the third heaven as we talked about last time. In eternity, we will live on

this planet in a physical world that the Lord has created for us. It is going to be glorious. We will cover more of that material next time.

“Heaven – Millennial vs. Eternal Kingdom” – August 11, 2021

We are discussing the issue of what is heaven like. The subject I would like to address this time is: Is there a difference between the Millennial Kingdom and the Eternal Kingdom? I believe there is a major difference, and we find that in Revelation 20.

It says in Revelation 20:1, “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,” as we continue down through this passage all the way to Revelation 20:7, we see consistently mentioned that this kingdom will last for one thousand years. In the Old Testament there was a great deal of information, huge sections of Scripture, dealing with what the Kingdom Age, or Millennial Kingdom, would look like. There would be the restoration of the nation of Israel in the land. There would be the believers who were Gentiles joining them. There would be Jesus sitting on the throne of David. There would be longevity in which people would live for much, much longer than they live now. There would be prosperity. The farms could not hardly hold all the produce that is being produced and on and on. It is a reversing of much of the effects of the curse on the planet. That is the Millennial Kingdom, only here in Revelation does it tell us how long it will last, a thousand years, which is of course where we get our word *millennium*. That is not a big issue unless you decide there is no such thing as a millennium and that the Kingdom Age and all those passages and sections in Revelation and the Old Testament are to be spiritualized. Then you get a blending of the Millennial Kingdom and the Eternal Kingdom that cannot be sustained if you read the Bible literally.

Randy Alcorn has written a helpful book on heaven. It is very large. Then he wrote an abridged version of that, and it is very good in many places. I am not exactly sure of his understanding of eschatology, but Randy Alcorn, makes some serious errors in applying the Millennial passages to the Eternal Kingdom time so that he takes a lot of Scripture that applies only to that thousand-year reign, and he moves that into the Eternal kingdom, and it is quite confusing at times. If you read those books, they are good books, but make sure you notice that he is using Scripture sometimes out of the context

of which they are given thereby telling us that there are some things that are not necessarily true. The Millennial Kingdom Age is a physical kingdom. It will be on earth. People will be born, they will live, they will die, some will sin, and some the Lord will judge. It has a duration of time of a thousand years and when those years are up, that kingdom ceases to exist and rolls over into the Eternal Kingdom as the Lord sets up the Eternal Kingdom.

We see a description of the Eternal Kingdom in Revelation 21:4, "and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." And He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.'" So, the Eternal Kingdom is very different. There is no death, crying, mourning, sadness, or heartache. Those things have passed away. A new era has begun. It is an era where the Lord is reigning among us forever and ever and all things are new. So, it is a very different world.

Concerning time, we have to admit that we are not certain about that. The Lord is not a being of time. He invented time when He created the universe. So, He sits outside of time in ways, we most likely cannot comprehend. In the Eternal Kingdom, will there be time? We will have new glorified bodies, so will there be time? That is a good question that I don't know that I have a perfect answer for, but I think we will be creatures of time. God created us physical, beings of time and so I think there will be a register of time throughout the eternal state, but it will be an eternal state. There will never be an end to that time and eternity goes on forever and ever with Him.

So, there is a real difference even though we don't have all the pieces of the puzzle, there is a real difference between the Millennial Kingdom that lasts a thousand years and still has some ramifications of the curse and the Eternal Kingdom that does not. We must be very careful taking the Old Testament pictures and descriptions of the Millennial Kingdom and moving them into the Eternal Kingdom.

We will look at some of those particulars as we move forward in our study of what heaven is like.

“Heaven – What Will It Be Like” – August 12, 2021

We are having a little mini-series on heaven. Our question today is: What will heaven be like for the redeemed? We are not asking what heaven is like now, but what it will be like then. We are going to look at what we will be doing there in heaven, in glory with the Lord today.

In Revelation 19, we pick up on the issue of worship. One of the primary features in heaven is the worship of God. We find here in Revelation 19:1-6, “After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because his judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her.’ And a second time they said, ‘Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever.’ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, “Amen, Hallelujah!” And a voice came from the throne, saying, ‘Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.’ Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.’” What we have is a picture, which is very indicative of other scriptures, that the heavens are filled with the praise of God. It is a great worship time of the Lord. Some have said if you don’t enjoy worshiping God, you won’t enjoy heaven. I think there is some truth to that, but I also know we are very limited creatures here on earth, even as regenerate, children of God. We are easily distracted. Our hearts are often cold. Our minds are not able to focus as we should. That does not mean we do not love the Lord. It does not mean we do not worship Him, but our worship is always tainted by the flesh that we still live in. So, don’t get to upset if you are not a person who just absolutely adores to worship all the time. At the same time, let us not minimize the importance of worshiping our great God. There is nothing more valuable or wonderful than worshiping the One who deserves it, and that is the Lord Himself. Our worship there will be perfect worship. It will be pure worship like we see reflected in scriptures such as these. The true worship of God. Also, there will be fellowship there in Revelation 19:9, it says, “Then he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the

marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, “These are true words of God.” We see this picture of the marriage supper of the Lamb. The coming together of God’s people to worship Him at a supper. As a church when we get together, we often eat! That simply is part of our fellowship, and it is what we do. People enjoy coming together around a meal. So, we have this beautiful picture of the marriage supper of the Lamb where God’s people are gathered around this supper fellowshiping with not only Him in worship, but also fellowshiping with one another. So, part of our joy of heaven will be being with other like-minded believers who are worshiping God and fellowshiping around the supper and the provisions that He has provided for us.

In Revelation 22:3, we also see that we will serve Him, it says, “There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him.” So, for all of eternity we will have the privilege of serving our great God. What we are doing there and how we serve Him and in what capacities we will have in service is vague in Scripture. We cannot know for certain what that looks like, but we do know that we are not going to be sitting around doing nothing. We will serve Him, and we will serve Him joyfully and happily as well.

Then there is reward in heaven that we see in Revelation 22:5, “And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.” So, we have also here the reward that will be ours as we bask in the light of the glory of Christ Himself.

Back in Revelation 14:13, we have the fact that heaven will be a place of rest. Often that sounds very inviting to us, doesn’t it? It says at the end of 14:13, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.” Rest is an inviting thing, but it is not a rest in which we do nothing and sit around all day in lounge chairs. We are resting from labors that have burdened us from the curse. That will no longer be true, and now we will serve Him, and we will serve Him in productivity. Even in a sense in which it is described as rest.

These are some of the things we will do in heaven for all of eternity with Him. How inviting and wonderful that is to serve and worship and rest and to enjoy that which God has provided for us in perfect fellowship with one another.

We will look at one more issue before we close out this subject for this week.

“Heaven” – August 13, 2021

We are going to finish out our discussion today of what is heaven like with the question: What will we be like in heaven? Will we have physical bodies, and if so what kind of bodies will they be?

We will start in John 5:28, it says, “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.” He is speaking here about the resurrection. All will be resurrected, whether you are a believer or a nonbeliever. Whether you know Christ or not, you will be resurrected and you will be given a new body.

In Philippians 3:21, it says this to the Christian, “who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” We are going to have transformed bodies that are in some fashion conformed to His body as well.

The central passage on what we will be like in heaven when it comes to our physical form is found in 1 Corinthians 15. This is the key passage in Scripture on resurrection. Let’s look at a few things here starting with 1 Corinthians 15:35, “But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” Paul is not too excited about that question. He says, “You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.” So, we plant a seed in the ground, but what comes out of that seed does not look like the seed, it looks like something else. So, the body as it dies and is resurrected will be a body that will be in connection with the body that passed away, but at the same time it will be different.

He goes on down to 1 Corinthians 15:42 and gives some general descriptions of that body, “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body,” so, we have an imperishable body,

"it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory," so a glorified body, "it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power," so, a powerful body, "it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body," by that he means a body in tune and in alignment with God Himself. So, we have a spiritual body as well.

Then he moves on to 1 Corinthians 15:51 and he begins to get little more particular, it says, "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed," so we are going to have changed bodies, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." Whatever we are now will be changed. He continues on, "For this perishable must put on the imperishable and this mortal must put on immortality." We are now immortal. "But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" Now he is talking about this body that will be changed. He is speaking here of the rapture. We looked at that during our Revelation study some time ago. He is talking about the moment when the Lord comes back for us. He is talking about Christians here. Christians are going to be resurrected from the dead as 1 Thessalonians 4 tells us that. If you have passed away prior to the coming of Christ, then He will resurrect your body from the grave and He will change it and give you a new and glorified, resurrected body. What about the believers that are still alive and on earth when He returns? He says they too will be changed, and he talks about that here in 1 Corinthians 15. It is a mystery. It is not something that was revealed in the Old Testament, but it is something that God reveals to us in the New Testament. We are not all going to sleep. We are not all going to die, some will be here when He returns. Wouldn't that be wonderful to be part of that group of people. I think all Christians have always hoped that they would be part of that and some of us will be. He is going to give us this new body. It is incorruptible. It never gets sick. It never gets tired. It never dies. It is immortal, so it goes on forever and ever. It will exist throughout all of eternity and never in any sense deteriorate. So, we look forward to that and so we can say, "Death is swallowed up in victory," and he even says, "O Death, where is your sting?" Death loses its power over such creatures. We are forever living in the presence of the Lord in this new glorified and resurrected body.

We look forward to that, don't we? So, we don't know all the details of what the body looks like and so forth, but I do want to talk about that next time. We do know this; we are going to have these wonderful bodies that will have connection with our bodies now but will be radically and wonderfully changed by our Lord at that time. So, we look forward to that.

That gives us not only a wonderful day in the Lord, but a wonderful eternity in the Lord. Who doesn't look forward to that!

"Heaven" – August 16, 2021

We have been looking at the subject of what is heaven like and that includes not only heaven but the eternal state that the Lord will take us to when we leave this life. So, that is the subject. We are looking at different issues wrapped around that. I think that most people are confused about heaven and a lot of people aren't even very happy about going there. I think back to reading the book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. This is meant to be a humorous point in the storyline where Miss Watson had been talking to Huck about heaven and he says:

Miss Watson told me all about Heaven. She said all a body had to do there was to go around all day with a harp and sing, forever. So, I didn't think much of it. But I never said so. I asked Miss Watson if she reckoned Tom Sawyer would go to Heaven, and she said, "Not by a long sight!" I was glad about that because I wanted Tom and me to be together.

I think that although that is humorous and probably was Mark Twain's view, I don't know that it is an unusual view for most people. I think a lot of people figure heaven is a bore, they wouldn't want to go there and if they were there then their friends wouldn't be there. So, I think that is the attitude of many people. That is certainly not the attitude of Scripture and the writers of Scripture. So, we are looking at the subject on heaven and the eternal state.

The question on the agenda today is: How old will we be in heaven and what will we look like? This is something that comes up quite often. How old will you be in heaven? What would be your appearance in heaven in that regard? What we find out in Scripture is that there is no answer to that. No picture whatsoever of what that looks like. What we do have is 1 Corinthians 15:51, "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable and this mortal must put on immortality." So that is kind of the essence of what we have in the scriptures. We are going to be changed. We are not going to look like we do

now as such. Apparently, there is connection with that, but exactly what we look like we don't know. We don't know how old we will appear. There have been different ideas on that, and fictional books written of how old we will be in heaven and what people will see us as in heaven. We really don't know. I think going back as far as we can go back people have felt that we would be around thirty years old. That is on the basis of the life of Jesus as an adult in His early thirties. Many people consider the epitome of our physical appearance as the time when we are out of the stage of youth that might have some blemishes and then we are not yet ready for the old age and the blemishes that come with that so there in the early thirties might be the epitome of our appearance. But, Scripture never deals with that and never tells us anything about that, so we are going to leave it to the Lord. We know it will be great.

Our corollary issue is: Will we know our loved ones there? That often comes up as a question and at funerals we often talk about someone passing away and going to be with their husband and children or whatever and that is a beautiful picture, but again, Scripture does not really address that. We do know we will be in fellowship with other believers in heaven. Will we know our loved ones? I kind of believe we will as we will know other believers, so certainly, we will know our family members. Some theologians throughout the ages, Calvin, I believe, was one who believed that if we are fixated on being with our loved ones then we miss the point of heaven which is a fixation on Christ. So, his idea would be that the attention is being focused on Christ and so it is Christ-centered and not people-centered. We are not told in the scriptures if we will be around our loved ones, if we will spend time with them, or if we will know them. Now, by logical conclusion, we will know other believers, so why wouldn't we know our loved ones. Would we know each other as we did in this life, or will there be a different relationship altogether? We will pick up on that in another question about marriage later, but again Scripture is pretty silent on that. We find in the Old Testament that people died and went to be with their forefathers, so there is that idea of going to be with those that we have known before, but it is pretty unclear about what that looks like.

Once again, we can have our guesses and we can think through our desires on that level, but we will have to wait until eternity to see what that actually

looks like for us. Once again, we know that the Lord has prepared a place for us to be with Him and it is going to be a glorious place. It is going to be like nothing we have ever known on earth. So, whatever it is going to be, it is going to be a great reunion with the Lord in heaven with all fellow believers, and I'm certain our loved ones will be a part of that. Exactly how that works, we will find out later.

“Heaven - Marriage” – August 17, 2021

We continue looking at what eternity will be like for us. The question we are addressing is what will heaven be like? We are looking at various topics on that subject. Today is marriage. This is going to kind of bank off of what we did last time concerning our appearance and our relationships in heaven. Marriage is an interesting one.

In the gospel of Matthew 22, the Sadducees, which is a sect of Jews who didn't believe in the resurrection, thought they had a perfect way of tripping up Jesus. They were going to ask Him about who would be married to a particular woman in heaven because she went through seven husbands. So, they elaborate this story, obviously not a true story, but she married a man, he died, and she married another man and went through seven of them. I don't know about you, but if I was number six or seven, I would be a little nervous about being involved with this woman, but it is just a made-up story. So, they get to the seventh one and he dies as well and then they ask the question in Matthew 22:28, "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had married her." So, they really thought they had Jesus pinned, because she couldn't be married to seven different men. So, if there is a resurrection and both the husband and the wife is resurrected, who is she going to live with for eternity. Obviously, Jesus was up for the occasion as He always was, and He turns it back on them in Matthew 22:29, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God." The fundamental problem they had is that they didn't understand Scripture and they didn't understand the power of God. They had too much of a human idea of God who they apparently didn't think had the power to truly resurrect people from the dead. He calls them out on that. They don't understand Scripture because the Scripture is clear about the resurrection of the dead.

Jesus goes on and He says, "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." So, there are a couple of things here that we look at. For those that have had a wonderful marriage, they have been disturbed by this passage of Scripture because the one they have spent their life with and the one they love the most will not be their spouse in heaven. For those whose marriages are not so happy I suppose

this is a good verse for them. That is not the point Jesus is making, however. His point is that the relationships in heaven will be different than they are in earth. So, there will not be marriage in heaven as we know it. Does that mean we will not know our spouse in heaven or spend time with that individual? Again, we don't know a great deal about that. I would be very surprised and find it strange that we wouldn't know them or get to spend time with them or reminisce about the days on earth and the joys of that time, but the scriptures are silent, so it leaves us not knowing exactly what happens. We do know we will not be married with these people that we married on earth. We are not going to have marriages in heaven. He says instead we are going to be like the angels. This does not mean that we become angels. A few people over the years have misunderstood that, and mostly it is myth and misinformation, but some people believe that, by going to heaven, we become angels. Of course, we all enjoy that Christmas show, "It's a Wonderful Life," in which Clarence had died years ago and was an angel but had not yet earned his wings. He was in the process of trying to earn his wings, and whenever you hear a bell ring an angel earns its wings. It's a wonderful story and we enjoy that, but it is not biblical in the least. People do not become angels when they die. That is a totally different group of beings. People are a race of people made in the image of God. Angels are created spirit-beings, they are a host, there is no connection between angels and people in that regard. So, we do not become angels, but what we do find here is that angels do exist, and we are not surprised by that. We find that throughout Scripture. So, angels do exist in heaven, and they are not married. They are spirit beings so there is no reason for them to be married. So, what we find populating heaven is spirit beings such as angels and those other spirit beings that may not be called angels as such, but we find them in the book of Revelation, for example, and people who are physical and spiritual who are populating the new heavens and the new earth.

There are two different categories along with the Trinity that will be there throughout eternity. This is the population of our eternal state. It is going to be a glorious one. We would like to have more details, but my hunch is that any detail more than what the Lord has already given us would be too much for us to comprehend and even appreciate. So, we have a surprise waiting for us in eternity and it is a glorious one.

Join me next time as we continue on!

“Heaven – What About Pets” – August 18, 2021

We have looked at what we will look like in heaven, our appearance, and our age. Last time we talked about marriage and family relationships in heaven. Today we are going to look in Isaiah 11.

We want to move now to another subject on the minds of a lot of people. That is animals. I don't know how many people I have talked to that believe or hope that their animal, Fido or Fluffy, or whoever they are attached to will be in heaven with them when they go there. They even talk about that when they die that maybe they are in heaven. Children, of course, are really interested in that as well.

So, the question is: Will there be animals in heaven for eternity? Isaiah 11:6 is the verse that some have turned to in Scripture and say this is what it will be like in heaven, “And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also, the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his head on the viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” Some have taught that this is a picture of heaven and the eternal state and that we are going to have animals there and that they no longer will be ferocious. They no longer eat meat. They will no longer be vicious to one another. Children can play with the most vicious of animals on earth now and so forth and it will be a very different world and animals will be there. So that is a possibility, but this is a passage that is dealing not with the eternal state, but the Millennial Kingdom. So, this is a time prior to the eternal state prior to the new heaven and the new earth. It is not a description of the eternal state or the heavenly state of the new heaven and the new earth. Some believe this is a prelude to the events in eternity and that what happens in the Millennial Kingdom will kind of bleed over into what is going to happen in the Eternal Kingdom, just more perfected. We find here that even though these animals and so forth are on the earth at this time that they are going to die and decay and that would not happen in eternity. We find here a little boy and a child that has not been weaned and those

children will be growing up and in the descriptions in Isaiah they also will die in due time even though they live for a long time. So, what we have here is a picture of something taking place prior to the Eternal State.

The question is: Will this same thing happen in eternity? Probably the closest thing we can kind of link is the Second Coming of Christ back in Revelation 19, we find the Lord coming back and He is riding on a white horse and the church itself is following Him, an army, that is also on white horses coming back to earth and that is at the Second Coming, but once again that is bringing in the Kingdom Age, not the Eternal State age.

When we come to Revelation 21-22, there is no mention of animals there, so we do not know. We would like to think so, perhaps. We get very attached to our animals, we love them, and we like to think there are going to be animals in heaven as well. Again, logically, and hopefully there will be animals there, but animals don't have souls like humans do and therefore, the idea that our animals on earth now, the ones we have grown attached to and loved, those specific animals being with us in eternity is unlikely. Couldn't say it couldn't happen, the Lord could do what He wants to do. However, it is never mentioned and most likely, those animals that we were attached to on earth will not be with us in heaven. At the same time, we do not know if there are animals that will be created for heaven for us, but there could be. The Lord seems to have a special place for animals and has created that special space in our hearts for animals as well. Perhaps, the Lord will give us animals to enjoy there. We are saying *perhaps*, because Scripture again does not address it and we are going to leave it to the Lord and once again be surprised by the joys He has planned for us.

You animal lovers like myself can look forward to whatever God has chosen to be best for us!

“Heaven – Children in Heaven” – August 19, 2021

As we think about what heaven is like, I want to remind you in Revelation 21 it talks not only about the new heaven and the new earth and the new Jerusalem. Our primary abode in eternity will be the new Jerusalem on the new earth. The new *heaven* is a part of that, but new Jerusalem is where we will reside. So, we are looking at what the eternal state will look like.

Our question today is: Who will be there? We have looked at some of these already.

1. God.

Obviously, we know God is there as the heavens are God's, and He dwells in the heavens in ways we cannot comprehend. He is bigger than all the universe! The heavens cannot contain Him. At the same time, we find that He will be there and be tabernacling, being with the people on earth during that time according to Revelation 21.

2. Christ

Christ will be there. The whole Trinity will be a part of that. Christ will be the representative of the Godhead physically. He will be in physical form as we can understand.

3. Angels

The angels will be there. Angels populate heaven and they are there all the time. Throughout all of Scripture we find the angels, these spirit beings that God has created to serve Him and serve us as the elect are there.

4. Believers

The believers will be there. Philippians 3:20 says, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” We have believers there. Our citizenship is already there, we are a part of heaven, but we are just waiting for those days when the Lord will come back and take us to be with Him.

Another question that kind of banks off of this is: What about children or those that maybe because of mental capacity are not able to make a choice about Jesus Christ or place their faith in the Lord because they are infants, too young, or lack the mental capacity, what will become of them? We wish Scripture would give us more details about that, but we only know a little bit. Often, people who believe that children will be in heaven turn to the passage where David's child dies in 2 Samuel 12:23 and David says, "I will go to him, but he will not return to me," indicating that he will one day be with that child with the Lord in heaven. That is not a slam dunk however, because many believe he is simply talking about death. So as that child died, he will not come back to life, and so David will one day die and be with that child in death. It is not a slam dunk. It is part of the argument, but it doesn't do it all for us.

We do think of Jesus though and His attitude toward children. He said, in Matthew 19:14, "Let the little children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." He had a very special love for children. It is kind of hard to believe that the Lord would say, "for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these," as He is blessing little children and yet at the same time say that little children will not be there. Again, however, that is not a clear case.

When we come to Revelation 20, this is kind of an odd place to go for this discussion, but in Revelation 20:13 at the Great White Throne judgment, we find that people are judged there on the basis of their deeds, it says, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:13 seems to indicate that the judgment will take place according to their deeds. Children, not having the ability or capacity to either choose the Lord or not, to choose righteousness, living for the Lord, and obedience or not will then therefore not be judged according to their deeds in that way. So, if that is the case, then those who are unable to come to the Lord because they are too young, children or others like that, would be

those that would not be judged according to their lack of faith in Christ because they had no ability to do so.

That would be my position. I believe based on the graciousness and the mercy of God and what we know about the character of God that He will, at the death of a child or those who could not choose for Him because of other mental conditions and so forth, will bring them to Himself on that basis at the point of death. Scriptures are not abundantly clear, but we believe based upon that relationship of God Himself, and the person of God Himself, and that out of His mercy and grace we will trust the Lord to do what is right and we believe that He will.

On that basis I am confident that the Lord will take all children to be with Him who have passed in this life having not had the ability to come to Him and the same with those who did not have the mental capacity to make those choices.

I wish Scripture was clearer, and while there are a lot of verses and passages we could turn, I believe we can trust the Lord with this, and we will see our children who did not have that ability to come to Him in this life and we will see them in heaven with us. We will place our faith in the Lord on that.

We will look at one more passage of Scripture next time.

“Heaven – At the Moment of Death” – August 20, 2021

As we finish talking about what heaven is like, we are going to look at a little different issue today. That is what happens at the moment when we die. We have been talking mostly about what is the eternal state like, and what it will be like in eternity for us, but everyone throughout history and most of us, if the Lord doesn't return very soon, will die and then we will not be in the eternal state as such yet since the Lord has not returned, but we will do something. Where will we be and what will happen to us between the moment of our death and the return of Jesus Christ and the eternal state? Where will we be?

According to 2 Corinthians 5:6, it says, “Therefore, being always of good courage and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” The picture we have in the New Testament, that once we are dead physically, our soul goes to be with the Lord. We are at home with the Lord is what this passage of Scripture is teaching. As a matter of fact, this passage, if we could take a little more time talks about us groaning in this life and that even though this life often is very good, and we enjoy it very much, there is something not quite right. We are living in a broken and sinful world and there are always issues and corruptions and problems and so forth. There is something within the heart of the believer that longs for a new home, and longs to be home with the Lord to be with Him forever. That is what he is talking about here.

In Philippians 1:21, Paul says this, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” So, those who might think that at the moment of death there is no more are misguided. Some in religious circles such as the Seventh Day Adventists believe there is a soul sleep so when you die you just sleep until the Lord returns, but that is not the picture we have in Scripture. Paul is saying that, “to live is Christ,” my whole life is wrapped around Jesus Christ, and to die is even better, so that doesn't fit the picture of soul sleep. Unbelievers of course believe this is the only life we have and when we are dead, we are gone, and we are extinct. Again, we know that not to be true because the revelation of God that talks to us about the afterlife and for the

believer—to die is actually gain. So, death shouldn't scare us. It is an enemy, and we fight it. We don't desire to physically die, that is not a normal desire to want to be physically dead, but when we do die, we realize that we have actually gained and have not lost in that process.

I also think of other scriptures in that regard. In the book of Luke in particular, we have what is often seen as a parable of Lazarus and the rich man, but again, if this is a parable, it is the only one in which Jesus actually uses names such as Lazarus and Dives is in the Greek. So, it could be that was his name. Nevertheless, if this is a parable, then this is the only parable where Jesus uses names. So, most people believe this is actually a true story of something that actually happened. We have the death of two men, a rich man who **did not** know the Lord. He did not go to Hades because he was rich, but because he did not know the Lord. Then we have Lazarus who was very, very poor and very sick and he died and went to be in "Abraham's bosom" which is the precursor to going to heaven. It is where the Old Testament saints went before the resurrection and the ascension of Christ. He went there not because he was poor and sick, but because he **did** know the Lord. We find in Luke 16:22 these words, "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried." Then in Luke 16:25, "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life,'" He is speaking to the rich man, "you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony."

So, let's look at Lazarus for a moment. Lazarus dies and goes into Abraham's bosom which is called Paradise in other places, and he is there enjoying the comforts of eternity. The Lord says here in life on earth he had some bad things going on, but there he is being comforted. So, at the moment of death for the believer in the Old Testament they go to a spiritual place called Abraham's bosom because their body has not been resurrected yet. For believers today, Scripture teaches about us going to be with Christ. So, our souls immediately go into the presence of Christ, and we are in heaven with Him until the resurrection. So, heaven is very important. Even though we are going to have a new heaven and a new earth, and we are going to live on earth for all of eternity, until He comes back those saints that passed

away (some have been gone for centuries) are enjoying the comforts of eternal life already in heaven with the Lord.

So, comfort one another with these words as the Lord tells us! Have a wonderful day in the Lord as you contemplate His plan for you.

“Hell” – August 23, 2021

It is only fair before we complete the subject of Revelation and heaven to look at what eternity is like for those who rejected Jesus Christ. So, we are going to spend the next five lessons looking at life for eternity for the unbeliever.

I want to start with some false views. People have often and still do try to sidestep the whole issue of eternal punishment and eternal judgment of hell. We understand that because no one really wants to think about anyone going to hell. That is a doctrine we would like to get rid of it would seem and so there have been many attempts to do so by coming up with different theories.

So, I want to mention very quickly five different views not found in Scripture but have been taught often by the church or by those that are maybe not Christians but those who are looking for an escape:

1. Universalism

Going back almost to the beginning of the church fathers. Back to Origen for example who lived some decades after the apostles. There has been the view that ultimately everybody is going to make it to heaven. There have been various features and various nuances of Universalism where even if people go to hell for a time, ultimately, they will make it to heaven so then ultimately everyone will be saved. Rob Bell, wrote a rather famous book called Love Wins where he espoused the point of view that there is a universalism that all people will be saved. Of course, Scripture doesn't teach that. It warns about heaven and hell and about going to hell and how to avoid it all the way through Scripture and yet that has been prominent in ancient times as well as today.

2. Purgatory

Purgatory is a doctrine that is basically a Roman Catholic doctrine. We find traces of it going back to the Middle Ages. It wasn't canonized, however, until the Council of Trent in the 1600s in response to the Reformers challenging the Roman Catholics on some of their doctrines.

The Roman Catholics then brought into their understanding of Scripture the Apocrypha books, and one of the Maccabees books has an allusion to something like a purgatory, but even that is not very clear. The idea of Purgatory is that when we die as a believer, then we will not go to heaven because there will still be residual sins in us. So, we go to Purgatory where we are purified, depending on our situation and our level of sinfulness. There we are purified over a period of years or maybe centuries, but ultimately those that are true believers will spring out of Purgatory and go to heaven. That's the idea of Purgatory. Never taught anywhere in the scriptures, and even questionable in the Apocrypha, but that is Roman Catholic dogma.

3. Limbo

That is another view that has been found kind of like a Purgatory, but apparently mostly for children. What happened to children when they die? This is a doctrine that sprung up many centuries ago, called limbo, in which children live in kind of an in between state for eternity. They don't go to heaven because they are not truly saved. These are, in the Roman Catholic system, unbaptized children whom they believe will not make it to heaven. So, they are in limbo. They don't go to hell, and they don't go to heaven, but they live in this in between state for all of eternity.

4. Annihilation, sometimes called Extinction

This is a view that is found even among some Evangelicals with the idea that eventually even if people go to hell, either immediately or eventually, they will be annihilated, and cease to exist. So, there is no eternal punishment. There is no eternal hell. There might be a temporary hell. Perhaps some people might be there for a minute and others might be there for centuries but eventually they will be extinguished or annihilated. Again, there are a lot of different views on that subject because there is no Scripture that teaches that and therefore it is pretty much up for grabs on what you want to believe.

5. Reincarnation

This is not found anywhere in Scripture at all. Reincarnation is the idea coming out of Eastern Mysticism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Mainly

Hinduism. It's the idea that when you die you come back as another creature, perhaps an animal, an insect, another person, but it is an idea of reincarnation and a second chance and a second life. In the Hindu system this continues perpetually for centuries and maybe even ongoing. This is not taught in Scripture, of course. Hebrews 9:27 teaches, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." There is only one life, one death, and ultimately a judgment for those who have rejected Jesus Christ, and those who know Jesus Christ will also have judgment as we have seen before, but it will be a reward seat where we are given rewards for our service for Jesus Christ.

So those are some of the false views about eternity for the unbeliever. We will look at some other issues next time

“Hell: The Different Names” – August 24, 2021

This is our second session of addressing what happens to the unbeliever when they pass away. Last time we looked at a number of false views not found in Scripture concerning the destiny of the unbeliever. Today, I want to look at some of the key words that are used for the afterlife.

1. Sheol

This is a word that is found in the Hebrew and the Old Testament. It is all over the Old Testament. We could go to any number of passages, but the word basically means, the grave or a synonym for death. So, when we talk about people going to Sheol, it is more of a physical thing. It is a death. It's a grave. It doesn't give us a lot of insight as to where that person is after death.

2. Hades

In the New Testament we come to the word Hades, which is often translated, especially in the King James as, hell. As we will see there is more than one word translated hell, there are three different words in the New Testament. So, we want to distinguish them. Hades is found in places such as Luke 16:22, which is one of the most expansive passages in the New Testament concerning the issue of hell or Hades. It says, “Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.” Of the number of places in the New Testament that uses the word Hades, often it is a synonym for the term Sheol, the grave or death. We have at least four passages in the New Testament that would give us maybe a different dimension to Hades where there is a spiritual dimension, and this passage here is probably one of the key passages for that. So, we see that the poor man here, Lazarus is gone to be in Abraham's bosom. We talked about that, last week. We have the rich man here who has gone to Hades and in Hades he is in torment, and he sees Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. So, the Old Testament understanding seemed to be that there was a place called Hades. They only had two compartments, Paradise or Abraham's bosom, where the believers

went and now eventually Hades is where the unbelievers went. So, we find this is a place of judgment. He is being tormented here. We have to remember that at this point the rich man's body is still in the grave so whatever is going on here, he is not physically in Hades. Spiritually, apparently, he is, and he is under judgment and under torment. This is not a physical fire, but it is a metaphorical picture of the judgment that God is bringing upon the soul of one who rejected Christ. That is the word Hades which has the same connotation as Sheol, the grave, but also seems to add another dimension of a spiritual punishment as well.

3. Gehenna

In Mark 9:43 we come into our next word, Gehenna, that is found twelve times in the scriptures. Mark 9:43, it says, "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell," that is translated Gehenna, "into the unquenchable fire." So, Gehenna is another word, and it is translated hell even here in the New American Standard Bible. It had a direct link to what was going on outside of Jerusalem at their garbage dump where they were burning refuse and criminal bodies and the bodies of the poor were often in this eternal fire. This fire would be going on all the time burning up the refuse. When Jesus speaks of hell, there is a direct link to that understanding. The people in Israel knew that outside of Jerusalem there was a place where things were continually being burned. He uses that word to speak of an eternal fire, and unquenchable fire, an everlasting fire that speaks of hell. That is the word Gehenna, not the word Hades.

4. Tartarus

There is one more word, and that is the word Tartarus found only in 2 Peter 2:4. In that passage of Scripture we find that the reference is not to human beings, but to angels themselves. It says, "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment." This is the word Tartarus—the place of hell for angels. So, it seems to be a place of punishment for not people, but angels and that would be separate from human beings.

So, we have these four different words that are sometimes translated as hell in the scriptures, but we see the various differences between them. As we think further on that, we will have to think about how that all fits together in the eternal destiny of the unbeliever.

We will pick that up and go further next time.

"Hell" – August 25, 2021

We are continuing looking at what the eternal destiny for the unbeliever looks like.

We looked at some false views and some words that are translated in Scripture as hell and the differences in those words.

Our question today is: Why is God going to send people to hell?

We start with this. God is a holy God, and we are sinners. So, the primary reason why people go to hell is because they are unrighteous. They have not been rescued or delivered from their sins. They are in sin. Romans 3:23 says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." So, the Lord cannot populate, and He will not populate heaven with those who are unrighteous, those who are still in their sinfulness and wickedness. That is why Jesus Christ came, of course. He came to save us from our sins and deliver us from our sinfulness and bring us to be with the Lord forever. We will look at that later. Right now, we are looking at why people go to hell. The primary reason is because they are sinners.

If we get more particular about that, what is the sin that condemns us to hell? Is it the sin of the nasty nine? The horrible sins? Is it the sins of not obeying the Ten Commandments? What exactly is the sin that condemns us to hell? I think the answer is broader than a particular sin. The issue is that we have rejected Jesus Christ. The ultimate sin is the rejection of Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 2:3, we read, "how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard." So, this is a warning to the people that were being written to in the book of Hebrews that if they neglect salvation, if they neglect that which the Lord has provided for them for deliverance from sin, then the ultimate result of that is going to be eternal judgment and eternal punishment. He doesn't talk about that there.

He does later on, however, in Hebrews 10:26, say, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins," but this is a little more complicated than I am making it

out here. The passage is this: here is the offer of salvation. People have been given the gospel on how to know Christ as their Savior, but they reject it, and they go on sinning willfully. He is not talking here about particular sins of immorality or lying or cheating and those types of things. He is talking about the willful rejection of the knowledge of the truth. So, here is the truth about the gospels. Here is what the Lord Jesus has done for us, and people willfully reject that. As a result of that, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. In the context of Hebrews, what he is saying is, there is nothing else that can be done. Everything that is possible to do to save us from sin has been done by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other sacrifice and no other means needed. Now, if you continue in your sins and you reject the truth and go on willfully sinning—I don't believe he is talking about particular sins, but the rejection of Christ's great offer of the gospel—then we will be condemned.

Romans 10:31 summarizes the result, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." That verse alone is terrifying. To realize that for those who could be saved if they receive Christ as their Savior, but who have rejected that and have refused the gospel face the terrifying hands of the living God. The Lord who is their Savior if they come to Him for salvation, now is their eternal judge. To think about that is terrifying. It ought to give us shivers to even consider the idea that we will one day as sinful people go into the presence of a holy God. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

So, we have this picture of why people go to hell? They go to hell because they have rejected the gospel. They have rejected the offer of salvation, and therefore they have fallen into the hands of the living God who will judge them eternally.

What that looks like and what hell is like is something that I want to talk about next time. We will just get a thumbnail of what hell actually looks like.

“Hell – What is it like?” – August 26, 2021

We continue to look at the issue of hell. We have looked at some false views, word definitions and why people go to hell.

This time, I want to look at what hell is like. We must approach this humbly. We have a number of pictures and teachings, but to actually comprehend hell and what it is really like is no more possible for us on this side of eternity than it is to comprehend heaven. We looked at heaven for several weeks and realize there that though we get pieces of understanding, we still come away with knowing that we don't know a great deal. I think that is also true of hell. So, we must approach this humbly.

A lot of the talk about hell comes from the lips of Jesus Himself, but I want to look first at one of the passages in the epistles. 2 Thessalonians 1:9, which says, “These,” speaking of the unbelievers, “will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” This is one of the passages in the epistles that talk about hell. There is not a great number, but here is what we find.

Three things about what hell is like:

1. Seems to be a place of eternal destruction.
Destruction here does not mean annihilation that we talked about a couple days ago, but eternal wrecking, more or less. The destruction, the destroying of all that matters. It is an eternal thing that is talked about here.
2. Eternal separation from the Lord.
That is a terrifying thought here that for all of eternity one will not enjoy the presence of God. We know God is omnipresent, so He is everywhere, even in hell. David talks about that, I believe, in Psalm 139. His presence is everywhere, but the saving, loving, and glorious presence is not something that those in hell will ever experience. So, there will be that void of being in the presence and knowing the presence of God in that sense.

3. Idea of death.

Death means separation, so we are separated from Him forever.

This is a very ugly picture of what hell will be like. A place of death, destruction, and separation from the Lord.

When we come over to Matthew 8:12, we look at some words of Jesus, he said, "but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping, and gnashing of teeth." Another picture of hell would be sorrow. Jesus is speaking about those, especially in Israel, who have rejected Him, and He is contrasting them with those who do receive Him. He says, these people "will be cast out into outer darkness," so there is a darkness here. Is that metaphorical or absolute where we have true darkness? I think good Bible teachers might differ on that, but it is a picture of great sorrow. As a matter of fact, He calls it a place of, "weeping and gnashing of teeth." So, this is a place of anguish, sorrow, sadness, darkness, and destruction. It is an awful thing to be separated from God for all of eternity.

Probably one of the most graphic pictures of those who might be in hell is found all the way back in Revelation 14:18. We find this Scripture speaking to those that follow the antichrist at this time, "Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe." So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God." So, we have this picture here of people that are actually judged by God because they have rejected the Lord Jesus.

So, we really don't know a lot of things. We know the Scripture talks about fire. Is that a physical fire or a metaphorical fire? I believe it is largely metaphorical but there could be a physical aspect to that as well. Bible teachers have kicked that around forever, but the point is that whatever hell is like, it is awful. It is a place of separation from God, anguish, sorrow, judgment, always being away from the Lord's great loving presence. It is a place that no one should ever want to think about going there although

people joke about this all the time. It is a place reserved for those who rejected Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Next time we will discuss how to avoid hell.

“Hell – You Do Not Have to Go!” – August 27, 2021

We are going to close out our discussion of hell on a very positive note: **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO GO TO HELL!**

The Lord Jesus Christ came to save us so that we are rescued from the wrath of God and the judgment that we rightly deserve for our sinfulness. So, we want to talk about that for just a moment. How can you avoid hell and eternal separation from God? How can you avoid the judgment that we rightly deserve?

I often talk about this in four parts so that we get this down well:

1. God is Holy

We have a holy, righteous God. The Lord Jesus has come to save us from the wrath of God. God is a holy God. God **cannot** tolerate the sinfulness of human beings. He cannot and will not populate the Eternal Kingdom with those who have rejected Him. So, we are in a plight that we do not know this holy God and we are sinful people. God is a holy God, but we are not. God is a holy and righteous God, and we are sinners that have rejected Him and want nothing to do with Him.

2. Sinful People

We are sinful people who cannot come eternally into the presence of that holy and righteous God. We are sinners. In Ephesians 2:1 it says, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” That is the awful picture of our condition before Christ. We are trapped in our sins. We are followers of our own lusts. We are under the thumb of the devil himself and we have no way out. So, this is our dilemma: God is a holy and righteous God, but we are sinners that have rejected Him and want nothing to do with Him.

3. Christ and His great mercy

We have a Savior who died in our place for our sins. Ephesians 2:4, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It would take the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy second member of the Trinity, to rescue us from our own sinfulness. That would require: 1) That Christ, who had never sinned, came to this earth as the perfect, holy Savior. 2) That He always kept the law and the commandments of God. 3) He would go to the cross where He would become our substitute where He would take upon Himself our sin and the wrath and the judgment that was due to us. He would die as our substitute. Die in our place on the cross of Calvary. 4) He would then resurrect from the dead showing once and for all to all who are noticing: whether it's the Father, the demons or humanity, that He has finished the work for us and done everything necessary for our salvation. Jesus Christ fulfilled every single requirement, and therefore He has taken our place and became our substitute.

4. Our Response

A response of faith is needed by us. Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." He tells us here that God now offers us a gift. The gift of grace whereby we can be saved. How do we receive that grace? We receive that grace, that gift, simply by reaching out and receiving it by faith. It is a gift of God. He makes that very clear, and He says it even clearer by saying it is not of works. There is nothing you can do to earn salvation. It is a gift of God that we receive by faith alone. We believe in Him. We take Him at His word, take His gift, and we are saved. As an example, if you were sitting here with me, I have this chess board next to me, and if I was offering to give you this king from this chess set and I said, "Here it is I will give this to you if you want it." Then if I asked you what would you have to do to receive it, you might scratch your head for a moment and then say, "Well, I guess I would just reach out and take it." That's the right answer. If you believe that I am offering

you a gift, you don't have to earn it, you don't have to pay for it, and you don't have to merit it; you simply reach out and take it. When you do that by faith, believing what I have said to you—that I will give it to you, then you receive this gift of this king from my chess set. Something far greater than that is offered to us. The gift of eternal life. The gift of salvation, and it is a gift given to us by God Himself because of the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf that we receive by faith alone. We don't earn it. We don't merit it. We receive it by faith alone.

This is how people avoid eternal punishment and judgment and hell. By receiving a gift that Jesus Christ has paid for and offers to us by faith alone. If you don't know for sure that you have ever placed your faith in Jesus Christ. You can do it right now. Romans 10:13 tells us, "for whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." You can be saved and know eternal life. That should give you an eternal, wonderful day in the Lord.

If you have questions about your salvation, please contact us. Here at Southern View Chapel, we are here to help you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.