

# Life After Death



**Outlines Dealing With The Nature Of Man,  
The "Intermediate State," And The "Eternal State"  
Of Both The Righteous And The Wicked**

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# **Life After Death**

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# Life After Death

## What Is The Value Of Such A Study?

### INTRODUCTION

1. Mankind has long been fascinated with the subject of life after death
2. Such fascination has given rise to such things as:
  - a. Interest in the occult
  - b. Speculation concerning the timing and events surrounding the return of Jesus Christ
3. It has also created much confusion among those who are Christians, who have every reason to look forward to the future with certainty and great expectation
4. Though the Bible has much to say about what will occur after death and in the future, many have not studied the Bible carefully on this subject
  - a. Their knowledge may be limited to what they have heard or seen on religious TV and radio programs
  - b. Or their understanding may be based upon a point of view that is taught by their religion's creed, rather than the Bible itself
5. It is my prayer that this series of lessons on "**Life After Death**" may help increase our understanding on what the Bible itself actually teaches on the subject

[In this lesson, I wish to answer the question, "**What is the value of such a study?**" But first, it may help to define a couple of terms...]

### I. DEFINITION OF TERMS

#### **A. ESCHATOLOGY...**

1. The systematic study of that which the Bible has revealed regarding the future is called "eschatology"
2. The term comes from two words...
  - a. **eschatos** - meaning "last things"
  - b. **logos** - meaning "word" or "discourse"
3. Therefore, eschatology is a discourse or study about the last things

#### **B. INDIVIDUAL ESCHATOLOGY vs. GENERAL ESCHATOLOGY...**

1. The field of "eschatology" can be divided into two general areas
2. **Individual** eschatology...
  - a. Pertains to what happens to the individual between death and the final return of Christ
  - b. Otherwise known as the "intermediate state"
3. **General** eschatology...
  - a. Pertains to what will happen when and after Christ's final coming

- b. This relates to what we might call our "eternal destiny"
4. In this series of lessons, we will consider both fields of eschatology...
  - a. Beginning with "individual" eschatology
  - b. Because for much of mankind, their death precedes the coming of Christ

[But what is the value of such a study, besides answering our curiosity? Is such a study really practical? Consider, then...]

## **II. THE VALUE OF SUCH A STUDY**

### **A. IT ENCOURAGES US TO SO LIVE THAT THE BLESSINGS WILL BE OURS...**

1. The Lord has promised wonderful blessing to those who endure - **Ja 1:12**
2. It is entirely proper for the believer to seek whatever blessings God has prepared for the righteous - **1 Pe 3:8-12**

### **B. IT FURNISHES A STIMULUS AND A THEME FOR EVANGELISM...**

1. Knowing what lay ahead for sinful mankind motivated Paul to preach - **2 Co 5:10-11**
2. It should also motivate sinners to obey - **Ac 17:30; Mt 16:24-27**

### **C. IT HELPS ONE TO ANSWER INQUIRERS, AND TO QUIET DECEIVERS...**

1. Many are sincerely interested, and we should be able to give them the correct teaching - **1 Pe 3:15**
2. But there are many bent on teaching their false doctrine, and we should be able to refute them - **Ti 1:9-11**

### **D. IT HELPS TO STIMULATE PRAYER...**

1. The importance of prayer to the Christian can never be overemphasized - cf. **Lk 18:1-8**
2. Meditating upon the "end times" can stimulate serious and watchful prayer - **1 Pe 4:7**

### **E. IT CAN STRENGTHEN LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER...**

1. Read carefully **1 Pe 4:7-10**
2. Increasing our understanding for what awaits the faithful can spur greater devotion and service to one another (cf. **Mt 25:31-46**)
3. That service in turn strengthens our love for one another!

### **F. IT CAN CAUSE MORE GLORY TO BE GIVEN TO GOD...**

1. Note carefully Ro 2:4, where we learn the goodness of God leads men to repent
2. The more we learn of God's goodness which He has prepared for those who love and obey Him, the more we (and others) will repent...resulting in the glory of God - cf. **1 Pe 4:11**

### **G. IT CAN INCREASE INCENTIVE TO BE STEADFAST IN THE FAITH...**

1. Consider **1 Pe 5:8-9**
2. The more we strengthen the inner conviction...
  - a. That hell is real
  - b. That it is Satan's sinister purpose to devour as many people as possible  
...the more incentive we will have to remain steadfast in the faith!

## CONCLUSION

1. Far from being an impractical subject of study, the truths concerning the "last things" can be of inestimable value to our present life
2. As John wrote, our hope in the One Who is coming, and what that means for us, can help to "purify" ourselves - cf. **1 Jn 3:2-3**

In our next study, we shall begin looking at **individual eschatology** by examining different attitudes held towards death itself...

# Life After Death

## What Should Be Our Attitude Towards Death?

### INTRODUCTION

1. Our previous lesson examined the value of such a study as "**Life After Death**", in which we suggested that it could...
  - a. Encourage us to so live as to inherit blessings
  - b. Furnish us a stimulus and theme for evangelism
  - c. Help us to answer inquirers, and quiet deceivers
  - d. Stimulate us to more fervent prayers
  - e. Strengthen our love for one another
  - f. Cause more glory to be given to God
  - g. Increase incentive to be steadfast in the faith
2. Understanding the value of such a study, it may be proper to begin this study in earnest by stressing what our **attitude** as Christians should be towards death itself
  - a. This will help us get started in the right direction
  - b. For whatever "conclusions" or "convictions" we may reach in future studies must be in harmony with the proper **attitude** as taught in the Bible
    - 1) Some views of seem totally out of harmony with a Biblical attitude toward death
    - 2) E.g., if after death the soul "sleeps" or ceases to exist, I find it difficult to understand why the Bible says what it does about the death of the righteous

[Let's notice first, then, some...]

### I. WRONG ATTITUDES TOWARD DEATH

#### **A. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST" ...**

1. Who believes that "matter, sin, sickness, and death have no reality"
2. I.e., who in essence denies the reality of death
3. Who might to read **Gen 5:5,8,11,14,17,20,27,31** and observe how often the Scriptures records "**and he died**"

#### **B. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "ESCAPIST" ...**

1. Who fears death, and so tries to avoid all mention of it
  - a. Louis XV forbade his servants to mention the word "death" in his presence
  - b. Some Chinese are afraid that the mention of "death" invites it
2. But that approach cannot provide any true comfort

#### **C. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "FATALIST" OR "STOIC" ...**

1. This person appears to accept it without any emotion, one way or the other
2. E.g., saying "When I die, I rot...and what of it?"

**D. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "BLATANT INFIDEL"...**

1. This individual curses death and the God (if there is one) who allows it
2. Who might say, "This is a dirty trick!"

**E. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "DESPAIRING PESSIMIST"...**

1. Tired of life, and in despair commits suicide
2. But there is at least one passage that teaches us to have more respect for our physical body  
- cf. **1 Co 6:19-20**

**F. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "SENTIMENTALIST"...**

1. This person gushes over deathbed scenes, grows very sentimental, but actually enjoys it!
2. Just like there are those who enjoy "thrillers", there are those who delight in "tear-jerkers"
3. Why? You will have to ask a psychologist for that one...

**G. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "RELIGIOUS FANATIC WITH A MARTYR COMPLEX"...**

1. Not to be confused with true martyrs who faced inevitable death with great courage
2. This person actually looks for opportunity to die for the Lord
3. Who should probably study such verses like **1 Co 13:3b; Ph 1:22-24**

[Such attitudes toward death are harmful or otherwise wrong. How then should the Christian view death? The same way the Bible views it...]

**II. BIBLICAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS**

**A. PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD...**

1. Cf. **Psa 116:15**
2. Viewed from God's perspective, death simply means that one of His children is finally "coming home"

**B. REMOVED FROM EVIL, AND AT PEACE...**

1. Cf. **Isa 57:1-2**
2. In times of turmoil, the righteous are often caught up in the loss of life
3. But we can consider it from a positive perspective, that such are no longer have to endure the evil, and are now in peace!

**C. A BEING CARRIED AWAY BY ANGELS TO BLISS...**

1. Cf. **Lk 16:22**
2. Those righteous who have suffered are immediately released from that suffering, and are carried away by the angels to a place of comfort

**D. A GOING AWAY TO PARADISE...**

1. Cf. **Lk 23:43**
2. So Jesus promised the thief on the cross

**E. A DEPARTURE, AN "EXODUS"...**

1. Paul viewed his impending death as a "departure", using "a metaphor drawn from loosing from moorings preparatory to setting sail" - **2 Ti 4:6**
2. Peter used the Greek word **exodos** {ex'-od-os} (translated "decease"), meaning "exit", the same word used to describe the Exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage

**F. A "GAIN", SOMETHING FAR BETTER THAN LIVING...**

1. Cf. **Ph 1:21,23**
2. This was another way Paul viewed his death

**G. TO BE WITH CHRIST, AT HOME WITH THE LORD...**

1. Cf. **Ph 1:23; 2 Co 5:6-8**
2. This is why death was considered by Paul to be a "gain", rather than a loss

**H. "ASLEEP" IN JESUS, YET LIVING WITH HIM...**

1. Cf. **1 Th 4:13-14; 5:9-11**
2. Those who have died "in Christ", are said to "sleep in Jesus"
3. Whether this phrase ("sleep in Jesus") supports what some teach as "soul sleeping" will be examined more carefully later, but Paul does say that those who sleep in Jesus still "live together with Him" implying awareness - **1 Th 5:10**

**I. A BLESSED REST FROM THEIR LABORS...**

1. Cf. **Re 14:13**
2. One of the many blessings promised to those who patiently keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (**Re 14:12**)

**CONCLUSION**

1. This should suffice to convince the faithful Christian that death...
  - a. Is **not** to be denied or feared
  - b. But can be something precious and even longed for, for the blessings it brings!
2. As said in the beginning of this lesson, whatever conclusions or convictions we reach concerning the death of the righteous must somehow fit in with these attitudes towards death as found in the Bible
3. May God give us more grace and greater faith to so view the death of those in Christ, and our own death as well!
4. And may we also ever give praise and glory to God, who through His Son has freed us from the "fear of death" - **He 2:14-15**

Have you been freed from the fear of death, by being made righteous in the blood of the Lamb?

# Life After Death

## What Is The Nature Of Man?

### INTRODUCTION

1. Our previous lessons have simply served as an introduction to our study...
  - a. We have seen that such a study can be of value
  - b. We have seen also that death for the righteous is spoken of as a blessed thing in the sight of God, and something even desired, not feared, by some early Christians-- Hopefully, this will have peaked our interest in what the Bible actually teaches concerning "life after death"
2. A study like this must necessarily include a discussion of the "nature" of man...
  - a. For our view of man's "nature" will have a bearing upon our views concerning what happens when man dies
  - b. I.e., those who believe that man's nature is **wholly material** (like those who call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses") have completely different views than those who hold that man possesses a soul or spirit which survives death
3. This is a difficult subject, and in this lesson I hope to...
  - a. Illustrate the difficulty, so that we may ever be cautious and humble in dealing with the subject
  - b. Look at those passages which I believe clearly teach that man possesses a "soul" (or "spirit") which continues to exist after death

[With these goals in mind, consider first, then...]

### I. THE DIFFICULT NATURE OF THIS SUBJECT

#### **A. IT REVOLVES AROUND THE USE OF THE WORDS "SOUL" AND "SPIRIT" ...**

1. Many try to make it sound simpler that it is
  - a. By suggesting there is one definition for each word which applies every time that word is found
  - b. "JW's" are notorious for doing this, but it is a mistake we all make at times
2. We might wish it was that simple, but we must bear in mind that one word often has many different meanings
  - a. E.g., consider the word "run"
    - 1) As an intransitive verb, it has at least fifteen (15) different meanings!
    - 2) As a transitive verb, fifteen (15) more!
    - 3) As a noun, eleven (11) more
    - 4) As an adjective, three (3) more
    - 5) In all, "run" can have at least forty-four (44) different definitions!
  - b. Such varied use of a single word is quite common in all languages, including Hebrew and Greek
3. The words translated "soul" and "spirit" likewise have many different meanings

**B. CONSIDER THE WORD "SOUL"...**

1. The HEBREW word is "**nephesh**", and at times it may refer to:
  - a. Animal life - **Gen 1:20-21** ("living")
  - b. The person - **Num 31:19** ("killed any person")
  - c. The body - **Num 6:6** ("a dead body")
  - d. Something distinguished from the body - **Is 10:18** ("soul and body")
  - e. Breath - **Job 41:21** (referring to Leviathan)
2. The GREEK word is "**psuche**", and at times it may refer to:
  - a. The person - **1 Pe 3:20** ("eight souls saved by water")
  - b. Life itself - **Jn 13:38** ("lay down your life")
  - c. Something distinguished from the spirit - **He 4:12** ("soul and spirit")
  - d. Something distinguished from the body - **1 Th 5:23** ("spirit and soul and body")
  - e. That which exists after the body is dissolved - **Mt 10:28** ("kill the body but not the soul")

**C. CONSIDER THE WORD "SPIRIT"...**

1. The HEBREW word is "**ruach**", and at times it may refer to:
  - a. Storms and wind - **Gen 8:1** ("wind")
  - b. The life principle - **Gen 6:17** ("breath of life")
  - c. Breath itself - **Job 9:18** ("catch my breath")
  - d. Something distinct from breath - **Job 34:15** ("spirit and breath")
  - e. A disposition or attitude - **Ecc 7:8-9** ("patient in spirit better than proud in spirit")
  - f. Non-fleshly beings with intelligence - **1 Kin 22:21-22** ("a spirit came forward...")
  - g. That which is interchangeable with "nephesh" - **Isa 26:9**
  - h. That which is distinct from the flesh
    - 1) **Num 16:22** ("spirits of all flesh")
    - 2) **Isa 31:3** ("are flesh, and not spirit")
  - i. The inner man
    - 1) **Isa 26:9** ("by my spirit within me I will seek You")
    - 2) **Zech 12:1** ("forms the spirit of man within him")
2. The GREEK word is "**pneuma**", and at times it may refer to:
  - a. The wind - **Jn 3:8** ("the wind blows...")
  - b. Breath - **2 Th 2:8** ("will consume with the breath of His mouth")
  - c. The Holy Spirit - **Jn 1:32** ("I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove")
  - d. Unclean spirits or demons
    - 1) **Mt 8:16** ("He cast out the spirits with a word")
    - 2) **Lk 4:33** ("a spirit of an unclean demon")
  - e. Angels - **He 1:13-14** ("ministering spirits sent forth")
  - f. Character and moral qualities - **1 Pe 3:4** ("a gentle and quiet spirit")
  - g. Purpose, or aim
    - 1) **2 Co 12:18** ("Did we not walk in the same spirit?")
    - 2) **Ph 1:27** ("stand fast in one spirit")
  - h. Perception, desires, feelings, etc. - **1 Co 5:3** ("absent in body but present in spirit")
  - i. Part of man distinct from the flesh
    - 1) **1 Co 5:5** ("for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved")

2) **He 12:23** ("to the spirits of just men made perfect")

#### D. WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS PROVE...?

1. Simply that "soul" and "spirit" have many different meanings and applications
  - a. Therefore we cannot just take one definition which may be true in one context and apply it to all others!
  - b. Yet many do this very thing
2. We must be cautious, and humbly consider the **context** of each passage to determine **how** the words are being used

[With that thought in mind, we are ready to consider the "**nature**" of man: Does man possess a spirit or soul that continues to exist after death? Consider those...]

## II. SCRIPTURES WHICH INDICATE THAT MAN HAS A SOUL OR SPIRIT WHICH CONTINUES AFTER DEATH

### A. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. An interesting phrase is "gathered to thy people", implying existence after death, and is made in regards to the death of...
  - a. Abraham - **Gen 25:8**
  - b. Isaac - **Gen 35:29**
  - c. Jacob - **Gen 49:29,33**
  - d. Aaron - **Num 20:24**
  - e. Moses - **Num 27:13; Deu 32:50**
  - f. Josiah - **2 Kin 22:20; 2 Chr 34:28**
2. There is the case of Samuel, who was brought back after his death - **1 Sam 28:7-19**
3. David could look forward to one day joining his infant son - **2 Sam 12:22-23**
4. The spirit will return to God at death - **Ecc 12:6-7**
5. The lament against the king of Babylon speaks of life after death - **Isa 14:9-11**
6. Likewise the lament against Egypt, Assyria, Elam, etc., who are all consigned to the "Pit" - **Ezek 32:17-32**

### B. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. In the teaching of **Jesus**
  - a. Man is both body and soul, and the soul can survive murder by another - **Mt 10:28**
  - b. The story of Lazarus and the rich man - cf. **Lk 16:22-23**
    - 1) Some say this is only a parable
    - 2) Even if it was (which is highly unlikely), parables were "true to life" stories, not fantasy!
  - c. His promise to the thief on the cross - **Lk 23:42-43**
2. In the teaching of **Paul**
  - a. There is "the inner man" that can be ever renewed, even while "the outer man" decays - **2 Co 4:16-18**
  - b. One can be with the Lord, while absent from the body - **2 Co 5:6-8**
  - c. There is a part of man that can be "out of the body" - **2 Co 12:3**
  - d. One can be dead, yet still be with Christ - **Ph 1:23**

- e. Reference is made to the "spirits of just men" - **He 12:22-23**
- 3. The teaching of **Peter**
  - a. He spoke of the "spirits in prison" - **1 Pe 3:18-20**
  - b. He wrote of those who are "dead, but live in the spirit" - **1 Pe 4:6**
  - c. He described the body as a tabernacle to be put off...if the body is a tabernacle (dwelling place), what dwells in it? - **2 Pe 1:13-14**
  - d. The unjust are under punishment, just like some angels - **2 Pe 2:4,9-10**
- 4. John, in the Revelation given to him, saw "souls of those slain", and they were capable of crying out with loud voices, and being comforted - **Re 6:9-11**

## CONCLUSION

- 1. Passages such these certainly lead me to believe that man is of a "twofold" nature...
  - a. There is the **outward** man; the body of flesh which grows old and eventually dies
  - b. There is the **inward** man; called at times the "soul" or "spirit", which can be renewed daily and continues to exist past death
- 2. Bearing in mind that "soul" and "spirit" can have many different meanings...
  - a. I suggest that in passages like **1 Th 5:23** and **He 4:12**...
    - 1) Either "soul" or "spirit" is being used in one of the many senses other than what we commonly think of it
    - 2) I.e., man is still basically "twofold" and not "threefold" in nature (as these two passages seem to imply)
  - b. Whenever **Materialists** use passages which might indicate that man's "soul" or "spirit" does not continue after death...
    - 1) They are using a passage which utilizes one of the many different meanings of the words
    - 2) And these passages should not cause us to completely throw out other passages which clearly teach there is something to man that does continue on after death!

In our next study, we will consider more closely where the spirits of believers go at death...

# Life After Death

## Where Do The Spirits Of Believers Go After Death?

### INTRODUCTION

1. Having determined from the Scriptures that man possesses a soul or spirit which continues after death, the question now before us is this: "**Where do the spirits of believers go after death?**"
2. In this lesson, I will be examining two different views:
  - a. One that I will call the "**traditional**" view, which is held by many Christians
  - b. Another that I will propose as the "**scriptural**" view, which I believe is more in harmony with what is revealed in the New Testament

[Beginning, then, with...]

### I. THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW EXPLAINED

#### **A. STATED BRIEFLY, THIS VIEW TEACHES THE FOLLOWING...**

1. When we die...
  - a. Our body return to the dust
  - b. Our spirits go to **Hades**, the realm of the "unseen"
2. This realm of departed spirits (i.e., Hades) is divided into three parts...
  - a. **Paradise**, the place of rest for the righteous
  - b. **Tartarus**, the place of torment for the wicked
  - c. And a **Gulf**, separating the two
3. During this interim period between death and the resurrection, the righteous...
  - a. Are separated from God and Christ
  - b. For God and Christ are "in heaven", and Paradise is in Hades, not heaven
4. Such is the state of the "disembodied spirits" until the Resurrection
  - a. At which time the spirits of both the wicked and the righteous will be united with their resurrected bodies
  - b. At this time will occur the Judgment, after which...
    - 1) The righteous will spend eternity with God
    - 2) The wicked will spend eternity in **Hell** (Grk., gehenna)

#### **B. THE SCRIPTURAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS VIEW...**

1. Is based heavily upon what we read in **Lk 16:16-31**
  - a. I.e., the story of the rich man and Lazarus
  - b. Notice especially verses **22-26**
2. **Lk 23:43** is also offered as support
  - a. Where we read of the account of Jesus and the thief on the cross
  - b. Both of whom would be in **Paradise** that very day following their deaths
3. That **Paradise** was not in **Heaven** where God dwells is based on Jesus' words in **Jn 20:17**
  - a. Words spoken three days after promising the thief they would **both** be in **Paradise**

- b. Yet Jesus had not **yet** ascended to the Father!
- c. Suggesting, therefore, that **Paradise** was **not** Heaven (or **in** Heaven)!
- 4. As further evidence that **Paradise** is not in **Heaven**, appeal is made to **Ac 2:29-35**
  - a. Concerning **Christ**...
    - 1) His soul was not to be left in **Hades** (the realm of the dead, which included **Paradise**)
    - 2) But after His resurrection Jesus ascended to the right hand of God (i.e., **Heaven**)
  - b. Concerning **David**...
    - 1) Surely he went to **Paradise** (in **Hades**) when he died, as did Abraham, Lazarus, and the thief on the cross
    - 2) But note that Peter said "David did not ascend into the heavens" (**Ac 2:34**)
      - a) Suggesting the one could die, be in **Hades (Paradise)**, and yet not be in Heaven with the Father
      - b) Just as Christ implied to Mary in **Jn 20:17**

[Such is the "traditional" view as I understand it. Now let's take a closer look...]

## **II. THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW EXAMINED**

### **A. THE EVIDENCE FOR THIS VIEW IS CONVINCING, TO A POINT...**

- 1. This explanation for what happens after death appears consistent with the information we have **prior** to the **ascension of Christ!**
- 2. But in light of what is revealed in the Scriptures **after** Jesus' ascension into heaven...
  - a. This "traditional" view may need some revision
  - b. But only concerning "the intermediate state" of the **righteous**

### **B. REASONS TO SUGGEST A REVISION OF THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW...**

- 1. After Jesus ascended to heaven...
  - a. **Paradise** (the resting place of the righteous) is now spoken of as being **in heaven!**
    - 1) We saw earlier that when Jesus spoke to Mary He had not yet ascended to the Father (i.e., heaven), though He had been in "Paradise" prior to His resurrection
    - 2) Note carefully that "Paradise" is used synonymously with the "third heaven" (i.e., God's dwelling place) by Paul in **2 Co 12:2,4**
    - 3) Whereas Paradise was once distinct from heaven, now it is not!
  - b. The expectation of the **righteous** is to be **with Christ** upon death - **Ph 1:23; 2 Co 5:6-8; 1 Th 5:9-10**
  - c. The book of Revelation speaks of the **righteous** dead being **in heaven** while much is still going on here on earth - **Re 6:9-11; 7:9-17**
  - d. The Scriptures speak of Jesus bringing the righteous with Him at His Final Coming - **1 Th 3:13; 4:13-14**
    - 1) I understand this to refer to the "spirits" of those who were righteous, and who are coming to be united with their resurrected bodies - cf. **1 Th 4:16**
    - 2) Of course, I suppose Jesus could "pick up" these saints in Hades on His way, but in view of other passages I believe they are already with Him
- 2. I have a hard time reconciling...
  - a. Such passages as these found **after** Christ's ascension into heaven

- b. With those made **before** Christ's ascension
- Unless something has changed

[Therefore, as an alternative to the "traditional" view, I propose a more "scriptural" view...]

### **III. THE "SCRIPTURAL" VIEW EXPLAINED**

#### **A. FIRST, EVERYTHING ABOUT THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW REMAINS THE SAME FOR THE PERIOD "PRIOR" TO JESUS' ASCENSION...**

1. All who died went to Hades
  - a. The wicked went to torment, awaiting judgment
  - b. The righteous went to Paradise to await the Judgment
2. Even Jesus, with the thief on the cross, went to Paradise, which was in Hades

#### **B. BUT NOW, AFTER JESUS' ASCENSION, THE "INTERMEDIATE STATE" OF THE RIGHTEOUS IS DIFFERENT...**

1. Paradise is now in **Heaven**, not Hades
2. The hope of the righteous is to spend the "intermediate state" in the presence of the Lord, awaiting the resurrection and the Judgment

#### **C. IF THE "INTERMEDIATE STATE" OF THE RIGHTEOUS CHANGED, WHY?**

1. That the change did occur appears to be clear
2. The "why" may be speculation on my part, but here is one suggestion...
  - a. God is holy, and sin cannot be tolerated in His presence
    - 1) The righteous who died before the cross, were forgiven in view of Christ's death
    - 2) But prior to the death of Christ, the true price for sin had not been paid
    - 3) So until their spirits were actually "redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ", they were not permitted in God's presence, and Paradise remained in Hades
  - b. After the cross, and when He ascended, Jesus offered His blood as the "eternal redemption price" to God to appease for sin - cf. **He 9:11-15; 23-26**
    - 1) With such an offering, the spirits of just men were now "made perfect" (**He 12:23**), and now in a position to be with God and Christ in heaven, awaiting the resurrection and Day of Judgment - cf. **Re 6:9-11**
    - 2) Thus Paradise (the intermediate place for the righteous) can now be in heaven!
  - c. And therefore the Christian, whose spirit is also made perfect by the blood of Christ, can have the hope to be with Christ and God in heaven, during the "intermediate state" prior to the bodily resurrection at the Last Day!

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Again, the **why** may be purely speculation, but I do believe there is sufficient evidence to reexamine a view many have traditionally held...
  - a. A view that was true prior to the ascension of Christ
  - b. But one that now fails to adequately explain many statements made after Christ's ascension
2. Our next study will look more closely at the condition of the righteous during the "intermediate state"

# Life After Death

## Are The Souls Of The Redeemed Conscious?

### INTRODUCTION

1. In the previous study, I suggested that the spirits of believers go to be with the Lord during the "intermediate state" between death and the resurrection
  - a. Implied was the idea that the souls of the redeemed are conscious during this interim
  - b. But are they?
2. In this lesson, we shall consider the doctrine of "soul-sleeping", and make some observations concerning it

### I. THE DOCTRINE OF "SOUL SLEEPING"

#### **A. THE THEORY...**

1. The souls of the departed continue to exist, but are in an unconscious state until the resurrection
2. This is not to be confused with the doctrine held by JW's, who believe there is no consciousness until the resurrection because until then there is no existence at all

#### **B. THE ARGUMENTS...**

1. The Scriptures often represent death as a "sleep"
  - a. **Mt 27:52** - ...bodies of the saints who had "fallen asleep"...
  - b. **Jn 11:11-14** - Jesus says of dead Lazarus, "our friend sleeps"
  - c. **Ac 7:60** - As Stephen is stoned to death, it is said "he fell asleep"
  - d. **1 Co 15:6,18** - Those who were dead are spoken of as "fallen asleep"
  - e. **1 Th 4:13-15** - Brethren who were dead "sleep in Jesus"
2. Other passages come very near to saying that the dead have no consciousness
  - a. **Psa 30:9** - The psalmist asks, "When I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you?"
  - b. **Psa 115:17** - The psalmist declares, "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence."
  - c. **Ecc 9:5,10** - Solomon, in his search for meaning, observes:
    - 1) "...the dead know nothing..."
    - 2) "there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."
  - d. **Isa 38:18-19** - King Hezekiah says concerning God that "Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You, those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth."

[Such is the theory and the arguments presented by those who believe in "soul sleeping." At face value, the doctrine appears very convincing. But let's take a closer look at it...]

### II. EXAMINING THE DOCTRINE OF "SOUL SLEEPING"

**A. ARGUMENT #1: DEATH IS CALLED "SLEEP" ...**

1. Nowhere do the Scriptures say that the **soul** of the departed one fell asleep
  - a. It was the **person** who "fell asleep"
  - b. Thus it can have reference to the **body**, not the soul
2. The term "sleep" can be a **figurative** reference, and a very appropriate one:
  - a. For sleep implies **rest**...
    - 1) When one sleeps literally, there is rest from one's labor
    - 2) So it is that the dead also "rest from their labors", cf. **Re 14:13**
  - b. For sleep implies **a ceasing of participation**...
    - 1) In literal sleep, one ceases in the activities pertaining to the sphere in which one has been busy during the hours of wakefulness
    - 2) So it is with the dead, they are no longer active in the world which they left
  - c. For sleep is generally **a prelude to an awakening**...
    - 1) In literal sleep, it is followed by an "awakening"
    - 2) So it is with death:
      - a) Though the souls may be conscious during the intermediate state...
      - b) ...at the resurrection there will be the "awakening" of the glorified and transformed bodies in which to house our souls
3. Perhaps it can also be said that the term "sleep" became a euphemism for death because of the sleep-like appearance of the body

**B. ARGUMENT #2: PASSAGES WHICH SUGGEST THE DEAD HAVE NO CONSCIOUSNESS AFTER DEATH...**

1. Notice first that these passages are in the **Old Testament**, when revelation of God's truth was not yet complete
  - a. The passages in Psalms and Isaiah are the expressions of faith and understanding by those whose knowledge of God's revelation was incomplete
  - b. I.e., their concept of "life after death" was not as complete and developed as that found in the New Testament
  - c. We should be cautious, therefore, against developing a doctrine of life after death which does not take into account what is ultimately revealed when revelation is complete
2. In some cases, the statements are made solely from an earthly perspective
  - a. This is especially true in Ecclesiastes
  - b. Where the theme is "Life Under The Sun"
  - c. When one looks at things purely from an earthly perspective...
    - 1) It does not appear the dead know anything
    - 2) It does not appear the dead praise God
  - d. Thus, **Ecc 9:10** is saying nothing more than that when we die, we are no longer conscious of things in **this** life

**C. FINALLY, THE DOCTRINE OF "SOUL SLEEPING" IS OUT OF HARMONY WITH PASSAGES THAT CLEARLY TEACH CONSCIOUSNESS OF SOULS AFTER DEATH...**

1. **Lk 16:22-26** - Abraham, the rich man, and Lazarus
  - a. Some believe that this is only a "parable"
  - b. Highly unlikely in my opinion, but even if so, parables used "true to life" experiences as a

basis for comparison, not science fiction or fantasy!

2. **Lk 23:43** - How can Paradise be a state of unconsciousness?
3. **Re 6:9-11** - Can souls cry out if they are not conscious?
4. **Re 7:9-17** - Can souls praise God and serve Him if they are not conscious?
5. **Re 20:4-6** - Can souls reign with Christ if they are not aware of what is going on?

## CONCLUSION

1. In view of such passages...
  - a. Describing the condition of souls during the "intermediate" state
  - b. Where they are very much awake, praising and serving God, reigning with Christ
  - The doctrine of "soul sleeping" does not hold up
2. We can best harmonize the Scriptures if we view the term **sleep** in reference to death as only a figure of speech...
  - a. Naturally drawn from how the body appears at death
  - b. Pertaining to our relationship to this earthly realm
    - 1) We are at rest from labors **in this life**
    - 2) We are not aware of what goes on **in this life**
    - 3) But one day, there will be an "awakening" (the resurrection), in which we will be rejoined with those who are still **in this life** (of course, they too will be changed)
3. In the next study, we shall consider the question: "**Shall we know each other in the life after death?**"

# Life After Death

## Shall We Know Each Other There?

### INTRODUCTION

1. Our studies in "life after death" so far have endeavored to show that:
  - a. Such a study is profitable
  - b. Death should be thought of as a positive thing for Christians
  - c. The nature of man is twofold: soul and body
  - d. The departed spirits of believers go to be with Christ at death
  - e. The souls of the redeemed are in a conscious state during this "intermediate" state
2. The question we will focus on in this lesson pertains to the idea of recognition after death:
  - a. I.e., shall we know each other after death?
  - b. For one may agree with all that has been said so far, yet believe that we shall **not** know one another...
    - 1) Either in the "intermediate" state
    - 2) Or in the "final" state
3. But what does the Bible reveal about this question?

[We begin by observing...]

### I. SCRIPTURES WHICH SUGGEST RECOGNITION AFTER DEATH

#### **A. ISAIAH 14:3-4,9-11,16...**

1. This passage refers to the king of Babylon
2. Who is recognize by those in Hades upon his death

#### **B. EZEKIEL 32:17-32...**

1. This passage speaks of Pharaoh and his army
2. Who is recognized by others in Hades - **21**
3. Who in turn recognizes those of Assyria, Elam, Edom, etc. - **22-31**

#### **C. LUKE 16:19-31...**

1. This is the familiar story of Lazarus and the rich man
2. In which the rich man recognizes both Lazarus and Abraham - **23-24**

#### **D. 1 THESSALONIANS 2:19-20; 2 CORINTHIANS 4:14...**

1. Both passages reveal Paul's expectation of being with His converts at Christ's coming
2. Recognizing them would be a source of great joy for Paul

#### **E. MATTHEW 8:11-12...**

1. Reference is made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven

2. The recognition of which would increase the joys of those present (and the dismay of those "cast out into outer darkness")

[To these examples we could add **Samuel** (who after his death was recognized by Saul - **1 Sam 28: 3-19**), plus **Moses and Elijah** (recognized on the Mount of Transfiguration - **Mt 17:1-5**). All clearly indicating that we will indeed know one another after death!

But what are some objections commonly made about this view? And how might one answer them?]

## **II. SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED**

### **A. OBJECTION #1...**

1. **Stated...**
  - a. Some of these passages speak of conditions after the resurrection
  - b. At that time we will have bodies by which recognition may be possible
  - c. But that does not prove that "disembodied" souls in heaven now recognize each other
2. **Answered...**
  - a. Most of these passages are definitely speaking of the "intermediate" state
    - 1) Those referring to the King of Babylon, Pharaoh and his army
    - 2) The rich man and Lazarus
    - 3) Samuel, Elijah, and Moses
  - b. Angels have no "bodies", yet recognize one another - e.g., **Dan 10:13**

### **B. OBJECTION #2...**

1. **Stated...**
  - a. If we can actually recognize one another, then we can miss those not there
  - b. This would cause unhappiness in heaven
2. **Answered...**
  - a. What about Jesus?
    - 1) Does He not miss many that He sincerely admonished (as in the case of the rich young ruler - **Mk 10:21**)?
    - 2) Would one then say that Jesus is unhappy?
  - b. Perhaps the answer to this question lies in the following direction:
    - 1) That when we die, all earthly ties that were not in Christ (including family ties) will lose their meaning!
    - 2) Do not passages like **Mt 12:46-50** and **Mt 10:37** point in that direction?
      - a) Our spiritual family becomes our true family, as it was with Jesus
      - b) Our love for Jesus will far surpass the love we have for others
  - c. Or does not God...
    - 1) Who has the power to take away death, sorrow, crying, pain (cf. **Re 7:17; 21:4**)
    - 2) Also have the power to remove any unpleasant awareness of loved ones lost while still permitting blessed awareness of loved ones saved?

### **C. OBJECTION #3...**

1. **Stated...**
  - a. According to **Mt 22:23-33**, all earthly ties will lose their meaning

- b. Hence, any recognition of those whom we have known on earth would be meaningless
- 2. **Answered...**
  - a. The passage simply teaches that there will be no "marriage" relationships in the resurrection
  - b. In this sense, we will be like the angels in heaven
  - c. This does not say "all" relationships will be abolished!

## CONCLUSION

- 1. There is good reason, therefore, to believe that we shall know one another after this life
- 2. And that can serve as a powerful motive...
  - a. To live our lives pleasing in the sight of God
  - b. To try and take those we love with us by encouraging them to live likewise!

In our next study, we shall take a look at the condition of the wicked during the "intermediate" state...

# Life After Death

## What Is The Condition Of The Wicked?

### INTRODUCTION

1. So far in this series, we have concentrated our attention upon...
  - a. The "**intermediate state**" of man between death and the resurrection
  - b. In particular, the temporary state of the departed righteous
2. Stated briefly, I have tried to show that upon death the souls of the righteous:
  - a. Are in **Paradise**, which since the ascension of Christ is **in Heaven** with Jesus and the Father
  - b. That they are conscious in this state of "bliss", and recognize one another
3. A passage which I understand to beautifully describe this "**intermediate state**" of the righteous after death is **Re 7:9-17**
4. In this lesson, I wish to address the following question: "**What is the condition of the departed wicked?**"
5. Once again, we are considering at this time only the "**intermediate state**" between death and the resurrection

[The Bible reveals several things about the condition of the departed spirits of the wicked. For example, they are...]

### I. ALIVE AND CONSCIOUS

#### **A. AS SUGGESTED BY THE STORY OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS...**

1. Recorded in **Lk 16:19-31**
2. Even if this story is a "parable" (which I doubt), like all parables it is "true to life", not based upon fantasy
3. The reference to "Moses and the prophets" (31) makes it clear the time frame of the story is set while the Law of Moses was still in effect, so this is a description of the "intermediate state"

#### **B. FROM THIS ACCOUNT, WE LEARN THAT THE WICKED...**

1. Do not cease to exist ("he lifted up his eyes and saw") - **23**
2. Are aware of where they are, and what is going on around them ("I am tormented in this flame") - **24b**
3. Recognize others ("Father Abraham...send Lazarus...") - **24a**
4. Remember those who have yet to follow them in death ("for I have five brothers") - **28a**

[Not only alive and conscious, but as already hinted at, they are...]

## II. IN TORMENT

### A. AS EMPHASIZED FOUR TIMES IN THE STORY OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS...

1. "being in torments" - **23a**
2. "I am tormented in this flame" - **24c**
3. "and you are tormented" - **25c**
4. "lest they also come to this place of torment" - **28b**

### B. AS REVEALED BY PETER...

1. The Lord knows how to "reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment" - **2 Pe 2:9**
2. According to Robertson's Word Pictures, the Greek word for "under punishment" (kolazomenous) is a present passive participle; the present tense emphasizes continuity of the punishment
3. Note that the wicked are reserved under punishment "for" the day of judgment, so the punishment is something going on **prior** to the Judgment itself

[Where is this "torment" or punishment taking place? As revealed in the Scriptures, the wicked dead are...]

## III. IN HADES

### A. THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD "HADES" IS UNCERTAIN...

1. Either from **Idein** (seen) with a negative prefix **A-**, meaning "the unseen, invisible"
2. Or from **Aianes**, meaning "gloomy, gruesome"

### B. IN THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. It is used to translate the Hebrew word, **Sheol**
2. Depending upon the context, "sheol" (hades) may mean...
  - a. Simply an unseen place
    - 1) As in **Jonah 2:2**
    - 2) Where it refers to the belly of the great fish
  - b. The grave - **Gen 42:38; 44:29,31; Job 17:13; Psa 16:10**
  - c. The realm of the dead (but not the tomb), where both good and bad people go upon death
    - 1) **Gen 37:35** - How could Jacob hope to go down "into the grave" to his son (even though that is how the NKJV translates "sheol") when he thought his son had been eaten by animals? This makes me think Jacob had in mind the "realm of the dead", not the tomb
    - 2) **Psa 55:15; Pro 9:18; Isa 14:9-11** - These passages speak of the wicked

### C. IN CLASSICAL GREEK...

1. Homer used the word as a proper name for the "god of the underworld"
2. In other literature, it stood for "the underworld" as the abode of all the dead
  - a. Which was divided into two parts (similar to Luke 16)

- b. These two parts were:
  - 1) The "Elysian fields", the abode of the good
  - 2) "Tartarus", the place of punishment for the wicked

**D. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, "HADES" IS FOUND ONLY ELEVEN TIMES...**

1. Ten times it is translated "hell" or "hades" (**Mt 11:23; 16:18; Lk 10:15; 16:23; Ac 2:27, 31; Rev 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14**), and once it is the "grave" (**1 Co 15:55**)
2. Some believe that "hades" is the realm of ALL the dead (similar to the concept of the Greeks), and made up of two separate parts...
  - a. With **Paradise** (at least prior to the Ascension of Christ) for the righteous
  - b. And **Tartarus** for the wicked - cf. **2 Pe 2:4,9**
3. Others believe the term "hades" refers only to the place of the **wicked**
  - a. That it is not clear in **Luke 16:22-23** whether Hades was just the abode of the rich man, or also that of Lazarus and Abraham
  - b. And in **Ac 2:26-27, 31** we may have a case of synonymous parallelism, with only the resurrected body of Christ in view ("soul" being used to refer to the body, and "hades" is referring to the grave, as "sheol" in the Hebrew sometimes does)
  - c. But remember the statement of Jacob in **Gen 37:35**
4. In any case, "hades" is used at least on several occasions in the New Testament...
  - a. As the place of the wicked - **Lk 16:23**
  - b. As a place where the wicked are in torment - **Lk 16:23**
  - c. As a temporary place, to be thrown into "the lake of fire" after the Judgment - **Re 20:13-14**

**CONCLUSION**

1. Though the Scriptures may not tell us everything we might like to know about the "**intermediate state**", enough is revealed to make the following comparison:
  - a. Concerning the **righteous**...
    - 1) With God and Christ
    - 2) In Paradise, which since the ascension of Christ is in Heaven
    - 3) Alive and conscious
    - 4) At rest in a state of blessedness
  - b. Concerning the **wicked**..
    - 1) Separated from God and Christ
    - 2) In Hades
    - 3) Alive and conscious
    - 4) In torment, reserved under punishment for the day of Judgment
2. In future lessons we shall consider the "**eternal state**" of man, both of the righteous and the wicked...
  - a. But does this not suffice to move us to so live as to experience the blessings of the righteous and to avoid the torment of the wicked?
  - b. If so, what are we doing about it?

# Life After Death

## What Do We Know About The Lord's Second Coming?

### INTRODUCTION

1. Everything we have examined up to this point in this series on "Life After Death" has pertained to the **"intermediate state"**
2. Though Christians can look forward to experiencing bliss during the "intermediate state", there are even greater blessings for us to look forward to...
  - a. The **resurrection of the dead**, in which our spirits will obtain glorified and immortal bodies
  - b. The **Day of Judgment**, which for the Christian will be a day of glory and vindication
  - c. The **new heavens and new earth**, in which God and Christ will dwell with us for eternity-- All of these blessings will be ushered in with the **Lord's Second Coming**
3. While most professing Christians look for the Lord to return, they often differ greatly over the details surrounding His "second coming"
  - a. The **premillennial** view looks for Christ to come in order to establish a literal kingdom on the earth, over which He will reign for a 1000 years
  - b. The **postmillennial** view understands that Christ will at some point begin a thousand year reign from heaven, at the end of which He will come to judge the world
  - c. The **amillennial** view believes that Christ has been reigning as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" ever since His ascension to heaven, and that His coming will be to raise the dead, judge the world, and usher in the "new heavens and new earth"
4. In this lesson, the **amillennial** view will be presented, which I believe most accurately teaches what the Bible reveals about the Second Coming of our Lord

[We begin, therefore, with...]

### I. THE "CERTAINTY" OF HIS COMING

#### **A. PROCLAIMED BY ANGELS AT HIS ASCENSION...**

1. Cf. **Ac 1:9-11**, the "two men...in white apparel"
2. Who said that "This same Jesus, who was taken up from into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

#### **B. PROCLAIMED BY THE APOSTLES...**

1. Peter, in his second recorded sermon - **Ac 3:19-21**
2. Paul, in writing to...
  - a. The Corinthians - **1 Co 11:26; 15:22-23**
  - b. The Thessalonians - **1 Th 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13**
  - c. The young evangelist, Timothy - **2 Ti 4:1**
3. The writer to the Hebrews - **He 9:27-28**

[Just as throughout the Old Testament one finds the recurring theme "**The Messiah is coming!**", so in the New Testament we find not only "**He has come!**" but also "**He is coming again!**"

To the certainty of His coming, we can add...]

## **II. THE "MANNER" OF HIS COMING**

### **A. HE WILL COME IN PERSON...**

1. "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come..." - **Ac 1:11**
2. "the Lord himself will descend from heaven..." - **1 Th 4:15-17**

### **B. HE WILL COME "WITH THE CLOUDS"...**

1. "This same Jesus...will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" - **Ac 1:11**  
(referring to verse **9**: "He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight")
2. "...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." - **1 Th 4:17**
3. "Behold, He is coming with clouds..." - **Re 1:7**

### **C. HE WILL COME WITHOUT WARNING...**

1. "...the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." - **1 Th 5:2**
2. "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes..." - **1 Th 5:3**
3. "...the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..." - **2 Pe 3:10**

[Of course, this unexpected coming of the Lord will not surprise the faithful, who seriously watch for the Lord's coming (cf. **1 Th 5:4-11**). With joyful anticipation, they await the personal return of their Savior.

What will happen when the Lord returns? To answer this question we now consider...]

## **III. THE "PURPOSE" OF HIS COMING**

### **A. TO RAISE THE DEAD...**

1. "...for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth..." - **Jn 5:28-29**
  - a. Note that there is but **one resurrection**, including both the good and evil, that will occur at one time ("the hour")
  - b. As Paul said, "...there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." - **Ac 24:15**
2. Those who are alive at the Lord's coming . . .
  - a. Will be "changed" in "the twinkling of an eye", being clothed with immortality and incorruption - **1 Co 15:50-54**
  - b. Then "caught up...to meet the Lord in the air." - **1 Th 4:16-18**

### **B. TO DELIVER UP THE KINGDOM TO GOD...**

1. Contrary to the view that Jesus has yet to establish His kingdom on earth, He has been ruling over His kingdom since He first ascended to heaven!
  - a. In fulfillment of the prophecy that God would raise up the Christ to sit on the "throne of

- David", Jesus was raised from the dead and made "Lord" - **Ac 2:30-36**
- b. All authority in heaven and earth has been given unto Him - **Mt 28:18**
    - 1) He is far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, with all things placed under His feet - **Ep 1:20-22**
    - 2) At the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers are made subject to Him - **1 Pe 3:22**
  - c. Christians are said to be "in" His kingdom
    - 1) Having been "delivered...from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love" - **Co 1:13**
    - 2) They are "in the kingdom...of Jesus Christ" - **Re 1:9**
  - d. Christ will continue to reign "till He has put all enemies under His feet" - **1 Co 15:25**
    - 1) Note that His reign will be concurrent with the fact enemies are still present
    - 2) As prophesied by the Psalmist: "Rule in the midst of Your enemies!" - **Psa 110:1-2**
  - e. Thus Christ is NOW "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lords" - **1 Ti 6:15; cf. Re 19:16**
  - f. And He will reign "till He has put all enemies under His feet" - **1 Co 15:25**
    - 1) The last enemy that will be destroyed is death itself - **cf. 1 Co 15:26**
    - 2) Which we have seen will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord when He will raise the dead - **1 Co 15:51-54**
2. So when Jesus comes, it will not be to "set up" His kingdom, but to "deliver up" His kingdom!
    - a. As Paul clearly told the Corinthians - **1 Co 15:23-26**
    - b. As taught by Jesus in His Parable of the Tares
      - 1) His kingdom will last until "the end of this age"
      - 2) After which "the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (i.e., the heavenly kingdom) - **cf. Mt 13:36-43**

[As suggested by the Parable of the Tares, delivering up the kingdom to the Father requires some "weeding". This leads us to consider another purpose of our Lord's coming...]

### **C. TO JUDGE THE WORLD AND PUNISH EVIL...**

1. God has appointed "a day" in which He will judge the world - **2 Pe 3:7**
  - a. The one appointed to be the Judge is Jesus Christ - **Ac 17:31; 2 Co 5:10**
  - b. The standard by which He will judge will be the words He has spoken - **Jn 12:48**
2. It will be a day of perdition (utter destruction) of ungodly men - **2 Pe 3:7**
  - a. Those who know not God and have not obeyed the gospel will be punished with "everlasting destruction" - **2 Th 1:7-10**
  - b. Those whose names are not in the "Book of Life" will be cast into the "lake of fire" - **Re 20:11-15**
3. More about the "judgment" will be considered in a future lesson . . .

### **D. TO USHER IN THE "NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH" ...**

1. As taught by Peter - **2 Pe 3:10-14**
  - a. This will follow the "passing away" of the present heavens and earth (**10-12**)
  - b. It is in fulfillment of God's promise (**13**; cf. **Isa 65:17-19; 66:22-23**)
  - c. It is something we are to "look for" (**13-14**)

- d. It will be a realm where righteousness dwells, therefore the need for us to be found "in peace, without spot and blameless" when Christ returns (**13-14**)
2. As taught by John - **Re 21:1-22:5**
  - a. It will follow after the first heaven and first earth have "passed away" (**1**, cf. **20:11**)
  - b. It will be the place where the "New Jerusalem" will abide when it "comes down out of heaven" (**2**; cf. **3:10c; 21:10**)
  - c. God will dwell with us in this "New Jerusalem" that has "come down out of heaven" (**3-27; 22:1-5**)

## CONCLUSION

1. The "purpose" of Jesus' second coming can be summed up by His statement in **Re 22:12...**

*"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."*

2. That Jesus has not yet come is only an indication of God's long-suffering (**2 Pe 3:8-9**), but rest assured that "day" will one day come!
3. In succeeding lessons, I intend to examine more closely several of the subjects mentioned in this lesson
4. In the meantime, what should be our attitude toward the coming of our Lord?
  - a. One of **prayerful preparation** - **Lk 21:34-36; 2 Pe 3:14**
  - b. One of **joyful expectation** - **Ph 3:20-21**
  - c. One of **patient endurance** - **He 10:35-39**

# Life After Death

## What Do We Know About The Resurrection?

### INTRODUCTION

1. As noted in the previous study, the "Second Coming" of our Lord will usher in a series of wonderful events...
  - a. The resurrection of the dead
  - b. Deliverance of the kingdom to the Father
  - c. The day of judgment
  - d. The new heavens and new earth
2. In this study, we shall concentrate our attention to just one of these events: **the resurrection of the dead**
  - a. As with many other things pertaining to "life after death", there can be a great deal of speculation about the resurrection
  - b. But what can we **know** about the resurrection?
  - c. I.e., what has been clearly revealed in the Scriptures about this subject, that can give the Christian assurance and hope for the future?

[First of all, we can know...]

### I. THE "FACT" OF THE RESURRECTION

#### **A. JESUS TAUGHT THERE WILL BE A RESURRECTION...**

1. A time is coming in which both those good and evil will come forth from the grave - **Jn 5:28-29**
2. Jesus assures those who believe in Him will be raised at "the last day" - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54**

#### **B. HIS APOSTLES PROCLAIMED A RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD...**

1. Peter and John "preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead - **Ac 4:1-2**
2. In his defenses before the Sanhedrin and Felix, Paul confessed his hope in the resurrection - **Ac 23:6; 24:15**
3. To the church at Corinth, Paul asserted the necessity of the resurrection - **1 Co 15:12-23**
4. To the church at Thessalonica, he taught the doctrine of the resurrection as a source of comfort - **1 Th 4:16-18**

[Unless one questions the authority of Christ and His apostles, the "fact" of the resurrection is undeniable. But how can such a thing happen? It helps to remember...]

### II. THE "AGENT" OF THE RESURRECTION

#### **A. CHRIST ATTRIBUTED IT TO THE POWER OF GOD...**

1. As He reminded the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection - **Mt 22:29**

2. And of course, "with God nothing will be impossible" - cf. **Lk 1:37**

### **B. PAUL ALSO EMPHASIZED THE POWER OF GOD...**

1. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead - **1 Co 6:14**
2. He who can raise Jesus from the dead can certainly raise us up at the last day - **2 Co 4:14**

[While it may be difficult for us to comprehend "how" the dead can be raised, it is not difficult for God to do it (unless "your" God is too small)! Another question to be addressed concerning the resurrection pertains to "who" will be raised. Therefore we note...]

## **III. THE "UNIVERSALITY" OF THE RESURRECTION**

### **A. AS TAUGHT BY JESUS...**

1. "ALL who are in the graves will...come forth" - **Jn 5:28**
2. Both "those who have done good" and "those who have done evil" - - **Jn 5:29**
  - a. One to experience a "resurrection of life"
  - b. The other a "resurrection of condemnation"

### **B. PAUL TAUGHT ALL WOULD BE RAISED...**

1. "both of the just and the unjust" - **Ac 24:15**
2. "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" - **1 Co 15:21-22**

[While there may be a difference in the nature of the resurrected bodies experienced (see later under the comments on "the body of the resurrection"), in some way EVERYONE will be raised from the dead! What about the timing of the resurrection?]

## **IV. THE "TIME" OF THE RESURRECTION**

### **A. AT THE "LAST DAY", WHEN THE LORD COMES AGAIN...**

1. Jesus spoke again and again of raising the dead at "the last day" - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54**
2. Paul wrote of it occurring when Jesus comes again, to deliver the kingdom to the Father, having destroyed the last enemy, death itself - **1 Co 15:22-26**
3. He later says that it will occur at "the last trumpet" - **1 Co 15:52**

### **B. WHAT ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATE RESURRECTIONS...?**

1. The premillennialists (and others) teach that there will be more than just one resurrection
  - a. E.g., all premillennialists teach at least two resurrections:
    - 1) The resurrection of believers at the **beginning** of the millennium
    - 2) The resurrection of unbelievers at the **end** of the millennium
  - b. Dispensational premillennialists add even two more:
    - 1) The resurrection of tribulation saints at the **end** of the seven-year tribulation
    - 2) The resurrection of millennial saints at the **end** of the millennium
2. There are several reasons why the doctrine of several resurrections is found wanting...
  - a. The Bible presents the resurrection of believers and unbelievers as occurring together - **Dan 12:2; Jn 5:28-29; Ac 24:14-15; Re 20:11-15**
  - b. The Bible teaches that believers will be raised at "the last day", not several times (and

- therefore several days, years, or millennium) before "the last day"! - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54**
- c. Passages offered in support of several resurrections do not necessarily teach what premillennialists say they do
- 1) E.g., **1 Th 4:13-16** concerns itself with the resurrection of the righteous, but that does not demand that the wicked are not being raised at the same time
  - 2) E.g., **Re 20:4-6** describes a resurrection of "souls", not bodies, and the reigning with Christ is likely to be occurring in heaven, not on earth - cf. **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**

[One more subject to be considered in this study, and that pertains to...]

## **V. THE "BODY" OF THE RESURRECTION**

### **A. THE RESURRECTION BODY OF THE RIGHTEOUS...**

1. Will be our physical bodies, but gloriously changed and different! - **1 Co 15:35-55**
  - a. By the power of God (cf. **Mt 22:29**), our physical bodies will serve as the "kernel" from which comes incorruptible and immortal bodies in which to house our souls - **1 Co 15:35-37**
  - b. Our physical bodies...
    - 1) Sown in corruption, will be raised in incorruption! - **1 Co 15:42**
    - 2) Sown in dishonor, will be raised in glory! - **1 Co 15:43a**
    - 3) Sown in weakness, will be raised in power! - **1 Co 15:43b**
    - 4) Sown as natural bodies, will be raised as spiritual bodies! - **1 Co 15:44-49**
  - c. Even those who are alive at Christ's coming will undergo this "change", in which that which is corruptible and mortal will "put on" incorruption and immortality - **1 Co 15:50-55**
2. Will be conformed to the glorious body of our Lord! - **Ph 3:20-21**
  - a. That which is "lowly" will be transformed to be like that which "glorious"
  - b. How? "...according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" - i.e., by the power of God!

### **B. THE RESURRECTION BODY OF THE WICKED...**

1. Very little is actually revealed, other than the wicked will indeed be raised from the dead
2. Though the Scriptures only apply the terms "incorruption" and "immortality" to the resurrection bodies of the righteous, most interpreters hold that the resurrection body of the wicked...
  - a. Is not subject again to death
  - b. Is capable of experiencing eternal suffering
3. There are some, however, who understand that the "second death" will be literal...
  - a. I.e., after the resurrection and judgment, the wicked will "die" again (a separation of resurrected "body" and spirit)
  - b. Not that the wicked will be annihilated, but that they will spend eternity as "disembodied spirits" in the lake of fire
  - c. This is not to be confused with those who don't believe in a resurrection of the wicked, or who believe the wicked will be annihilated
4. Since the Bible is relatively silent on this subject perhaps "...the best course seems to be simply leave the problem where it was left by the writers of the New Testament." (Ray

Summers, The Life Beyond, p. 93)

## **CONCLUSION**

1. There is probably much more about the resurrection that we would like to know
2. But certainly enough is revealed to motivate those who desire whatever God has prepared to love and obey Him!

Are you making it your aim to be ready for whatever God has prepared...?

***So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written:***

***"Death is swallowed up in victory."***

***"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"***

***The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

***Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. - 1 Co 15:54-58***

# Life After Death

## What Do We Know About The Judgment?

### INTRODUCTION

1. In his sermon at the Areopagus (Mar's Hill) in Athens, Paul concluded with a reference to the day of judgment - **Ac 17:31**
2. While in one sense people are judged in this present life by the response they make to Jesus Christ (cf. **Jn 3:18**), the Bible clearly speaks of a day in which God will judge the world

[The focus of this study will be to ascertain from the Scriptures what we can know about the **Final Judgment**. Beginning with...]

### I. THE "NECESSITY" OF THE JUDGMENT

#### **A. WHY HAVE A JUDGMENT...?**

1. From the story of the rich man and Lazarus, it is apparent that one's "destiny" is determined by the time of one's death - cf. **Lk 16:22-23**
2. If the "destiny" of each person is determined by the time of his or her death, why the need for a day of judgment at the end of time?

#### **B. THE PURPOSE OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT...**

1. Bear in mind that there is a difference between a "human trial" and the "Divine trial" of which we speak...
  - a. A "human trial" is primarily a process of **investigation**, in which the judge and jury are trying to learn the truth
  - b. The "Divine trial" is presided by an omniscient Judge with perfect knowledge, so the purpose of this judgment is one of **publication** and **execution** of the sentence - cf. **2 Co 5:10** ("that each one may receive...")
2. Another purpose is to **glorify God** for His grace, and to **vindicate God** for His justice!
  - a. Why is it that some sinners are lost, and other sinners are saved?
  - b. How can God be just in condemning lost persons who never heard the gospel?
  - c. At the judgment, those currently ignorant of the answers to such questions...
    - 1) Will be made aware and come to see that God has been both just and gracious in His efforts throughout the history of mankind
    - 2) Those condemned will come to fully realize they can blame no one but themselves!

[So it will be a time in which all will be made known, and the sentences executed. Exactly when will this occur?]

### II. THE "TIME" OF THE JUDGMENT

#### **A. SOME BELIEVE IN A SERIES OF SEPARATE JUDGMENTS...**

1. Dispensational premillennialists, for example, believe there will be...
  - a. A judgment of the believer's works at the time of the "rapture"
  - b. A judgment of individual Gentiles just before the millennium
  - c. A judgment of Israel just before the millennium
  - d. A judgment of the wicked dead after the millennium
2. But just as we saw in the previous lesson concerning the resurrection, the same may be said about the judgment
  - a. There will be but one bodily resurrection, and that at the "last day"
  - b. So there will be just one "day of judgment".

### **B. THE FINAL JUDGMENT WILL OCCUR...**

1. **At the end of the present age**, at which time the "heavens and earth" will be no more - **2 Pe 3:7, 10-14**; cf. **Re 20:11-12; 21:1**
2. **At the end of "this age"**, as Jesus taught in His parable of the tares - **Mt 13:36-43**
3. **At the coming of Jesus "in that Day"**, who will give rest to His disciples and vengeance to unbelievers - **2 Th 1:7-10**

[We turn next to consider...]

## **III. THE "CIRCUMSTANCES" OF THE JUDGMENT**

### **A. WHO WILL BE THE JUDGE...?**

1. The New Testament clearly reveals that **Christ** will be the Judge
  - a. As claimed by Jesus Himself - **Jn 5:22,26-27**
  - b. As proclaimed by Paul in Athens - **Ac 17:31**
  - c. And as written by Paul to the church at Corinth - **2 Co 5:10**
2. In some way not fully revealed, even the **saints** (i.e., Christians) will have a part in the judgment - **1 Co 6:2-3**

### **B. WHO WILL BE JUDGED...?**

1. **Angels** will be judged, as is clear from **1 Co 6:2-3; 2 Pe 2:4; Jude 6**
2. **All humans** will be judged, as evident from passages like **Ro 2:4-6; 3:6; Re 20:12-13**
3. **Even Christians** will be judged - **2 Co 5:10; Ro 14:10**; cf. **1 Pe 4:17; 1 Jn 4:17**

### **C. WHAT WILL BE JUDGED...?**

1. All **deeds** done during this present life - **2 Co 5:10**
2. All **words** spoken in this life - **Mt 12:36-37**
3. Even our **thoughts!** - **1 Co 4:5**
4. Indeed, there is nothing "hidden" that will not then be "known" - cf. **1 Ti 5:24-25**

### **D. WHAT WILL BE THE STANDARD WHEREBY MEN WILL BE JUDGED...?**

1. Jesus said, "the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" - **Jn 12:48**
  - a. As He will be the Judge, so it will be by **His words** that we will be judged!
  - b. I.e., it will be the words of the New Testament
2. And that standard is a strict one!
  - a. One sin makes one guilty of all! - cf. **Ja 2:10**

- b. And it declares that all are sinners! - cf. **Ro 3:23**

#### **E. WHAT HOPE IS THERE TO SURVIVE THE JUDGMENT...?**

1. The only hope one can have is made clear in the judgment scene of **Re 20:11-15**
2. That hope pertains to having one's name "written in the Book of life"
  - a. It is called the "Lamb's Book of Life" in **Re 21:27**
  - b. Those Christians who persevere have their names in this Book of Life - **Re 3:5**
3. Indeed, only those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb are in the "Book of Life", but only if they persevere to the end!

#### **CONCLUSION**

1. Contemplating the reality and circumstances of the coming Day of Judgment ought to cause every person to humbly consider their relationship to God and His Son Jesus Christ
2. There is no way we can hope to "pass the test" based upon ignorance, or on good works...
  - a. God now commands all men everywhere to repent - cf. **Ac 17:30-31**
  - b. But only by the mercy of God can we be saved, and that "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" - cf. **Ti 3:4-7**
  - c. Only by being justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God to come - cf. **Ro 5:8-9**
3. For those who will respond to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, they can have their names in the Lamb's Book of Life, and not fear the day of judgment!

#### **IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN THERE?**

# Life After Death

## The Eternal Destiny Of The Redeemed

### INTRODUCTION

1. As we rapidly near the end of this series, we have considered what the Bible says about...
  - a. The intermediate state, i.e., the condition of man between death and the resurrection
  - b. The second coming of Christ
  - c. The resurrection of the dead
  - d. The day of judgment
2. Now we shall begin to examine what the Bible reveals about the **final state** of man...
  - a. What is the eternal destiny of the redeemed?
  - b. What is the eternal destiny of the wicked?

[With this lesson we shall look first at "**The Eternal Destiny Of The Redeemed**" ...]

### I. THE "HOPE" OF THE REDEEMED

#### **A. WONDERFUL PROMISES ARE GIVEN BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES...**

1. Jesus speaks of the righteous as being in "the kingdom of their Father", and inheriting "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"
  - a. In explaining "The Parable of the Tares" - **Mt 13:43**
  - b. In describing the judgment scene in **Mt 25:31-34**
  - c. Compare this with statements by His apostles...
    - 1) Paul speaks of the "heavenly kingdom" - **2 Ti 4:18**
    - 2) Peter speaks of the "everlasting kingdom" - **2 Pe 1:10-11**
2. Jesus speaks of the redeemed being with Him
  - a. In "The Parable of the Talents" ("Enter into the joy of your lord") - **Mt 25:21**
  - b. In praying to the Father in **Jn 17:24** (cf. also **Jn 14:1-3**)
  - c. Paul also alludes to this continued fellowship with the Lord - **1 Th 4:17-18**
3. Indeed, such promises are comforting for the Christian, for they speak of unhindered and uninterrupted fellowship with our Lord!
4. Is this not our ultimate hope? To be with the Lord for eternity?

#### **B. BUT WHERE WILL WE EXPERIENCE THIS "HOPE"...?**

1. In other words...
  - a. Where will this fellowship with the Lord be experienced?
  - b. Where will the "abode" of the righteous be?
2. Will the "abode" of the redeemed...
  - a. Be heaven itself?
  - b. Or is it something now "reserved" for us in heaven, but when experienced it will actually be somewhere else?

[Previously I have suggested that when Christians die they will spend the **intermediate state** in heaven. While most Christians automatically assume they will spend the **eternal state** in heaven, it appears the Biblical evidence concerning the **eternal abode** may state otherwise! Consider carefully, then, as we examine what the Bible says about...]

## II. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" OF THE RIGHTEOUS

### A. TWO PASSAGES OFTEN QUOTED TO SAY THAT IT WILL BE HEAVEN...

1. The first is **Co 1:5**
  - a. Which speaks "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven"
  - b. Note carefully: this verse does not say that our hope **is** heaven, but rather that our hope is "laid up for you **in** heaven"
  - c. Whether our hope, when experienced, will be **in** heaven, cannot be determined with certainty in this verse
  - d. Only that for **now**, heaven is where our hope is stored
2. The second is **1 Pe 1:3-4**
  - a. This passage speaks of our hope and inheritance, "reserved in heaven for you"
  - b. Again: this does not say that our hope (or inheritance) **is** heaven, but rather that it is "reserved **in** heaven"
  - c. As before, we cannot determine from the passage alone whether our hope and inheritance, when realized, will be **in heaven itself**
  - d. Only that for **now** our hope and inheritance are presently secured in heaven

### B. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" AS DESCRIBED IN HEBREWS...

1. First, we find the author speaking of having "a better and enduring possession for yourselves in heaven" - **He 10:34**
  - a. Here the same point can be made as before
  - b. I.e., at the present, our "possession" is **in** heaven; but when we receive it, will it be in heaven then?
2. In describing the hope of Abraham and the faithful, the author speaks of a **city** (or dwelling place)...
  - a. "...the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" - **He 11:10**
  - b. "...for He has prepared a city for them" - **He 11:13-16**
3. Speaking of himself and his fellow Christians, the author writes: "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" - **He 13:14**
4. Here, then, is one way of speaking of the hope of the righteous, as it relates to their eternal abode:
  - a. It is **a city**, whose builder and maker is God
  - b. It is **a heavenly city**, in the sense of its nature
  - c. This "enduring possession" is **presently** "prepared...laid up...reserved" for us in heaven!
5. But we have yet to answer the question: "Where will this city (abode) of the righteous actually be when they experience it?"

### C. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" AS DESCRIBED BY PETER...

1. After describing the "day of the Lord" in which the present universe will be dissolved, Peter speaks of looking for "new heavens and a new earth" - **2 Pe 3:7-13**

2. For Peter, this is what "we" (himself and all Christians) should be looking for!
  3. Some questions:
    - a. Is the "new heavens and a new earth" just a figurative reference to heaven, or is it something different from heaven?
    - b. How do we reconcile looking for the "new heavens and a new earth" (Peter), and looking for "the city whose builder is God" (Hebrews)?
- The answer to these questions is found as we now look at...

#### D. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" AS DESCRIBED BY JOHN...

1. After describing the judgment scene (**Re 20:11-15**), John says that he saw:
  - a. "a new heaven and a new earth" - **Re 21:1** (cf. Peter)
  - b. "the holy City, New Jerusalem" - **Re 21:2** (cf. Hebrews)

-- In this way, John brings together both the "hope" of the author of Hebrews and the apostle Peter!
2. But where is this "city" at this point? Note carefully how three times in Revelation, it is stated that the city is **not in heaven** at this time...
  - a. "...the New Jerusalem, which comes down **out of heaven** from my God." - **Re 3:12**
  - b. "...the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down **out of heaven** from God" - **Re 21:2**
  - c. "...the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending **out of heaven** from God" - **Re 21:10**
3. Rather than being **in heaven** (the present dwelling place of God), this "eternal abode" is described as being in "the new heavens and a new earth"!
  - a. A realm where there is the absence of death, sorrow, and pain - **Re 21:4**
  - b. A realm in which there is complete fellowship with God and Christ - **Re 21:3,22-27**
  - c. A place of perpetual life and good health - **Re 22:1-2**
  - d. A place where God's servants both serve and reign! - **Re 22:3-5**

#### E. TO SUMMARIZE AND PERHAPS CLARIFY...

1. The redeemed have a wonderful hope concerning their "eternal destiny"
2. It pertains to a "city", built by God and **presently** reserved for us in heaven...
  - a. However, when experienced, this "city" (abode) will not be **in** heaven
  - b. But having come down **out of** heaven, it will be in the "new heavens and new earth" (i.e., a totally new order of things)
3. This is **not** to say that we will not be with God and Christ...
  - a. For as one considers the experience of the righteous as described in **Re 21-22**, we see that we will be with God and Christ forever!
  - b. To be exact, however...
    - 1) It is not that we will be with God and Christ in heaven...
    - 2) But that They will be with us in the "new heavens and new earth"!
  - c. Consider...
    - 1) "Behold the tabernacle of **God is with men**, and **He will dwell with them..and God Himself will be with them**" - **Re 21:3**
      - a) Note that in each phrase the direction is one in which God is with us; He dwells with us in this "city" which comes down **out of heaven**
      - b) Contrary to the idea that we are **in heaven** with God!
    - 2) "...**the throne** of God and of the Lamb shall be **in it**" - **Re 22:3**
      - a) In the "eternal state", the throne is in this "holy city" which comes down out of

heaven

- b) Whereas earlier in the Revelation, the throne of God was in heaven - **Re 4:2; 7:9-17**
  - 1) This latter passage I take to describe the "intermediate state"
  - 2) It is during this interim that the righteous are with God in heaven
- 3) "But I saw **no temple** in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." - **Re 21:22**
  - a) John saw no temple in this "holy city"
  - b) Whereas he saw the temple of God in heaven when describing the "intermediate state" - cf. **Re 7:15**
- d. Again, the indication is that God will dwell with us for eternity in this "new heavens and new earth" (in the "New Jerusalem"), not that we will be with Him in heaven

## CONCLUSION

1. Admittedly, in a book like Revelation we are dealing with very symbolic language, and we must be careful not to strain a point too far...
2. But the terminology used by John...
  - a. Is the same as that used by Peter and the author of Hebrews
  - b. As they wrote plainly of our "hope" (i.e., "city", "new heavens and new earth")
3. And these terms are used consistently in such a way as to make a clear distinction between...
  - a. What is currently the dwelling place of God (i.e., **in heaven**)
  - b. And where God will spend eternity with the redeemed (i.e., in the "holy city" that comes down **out of heaven** into the "new heavens and new earth")
4. Should we not be careful to make the same distinction?

Do we, "*according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells*" (2 **Pe 3:13**)? If so, then be sure to heed the admonition of Peter...

*"Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation..." - 2 Pe 3:14-15a*

And remember the words of John:

*"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." - Re 22:14*

# Life After Death

## The Eternal Destiny Of The Wicked

### INTRODUCTION

1. We now come to the final lesson in this series...
  - a. In which we will examine the last thing any Christian would ever want to consider
  - b. I.e., **"the eternal destiny of the wicked"**
2. Yet, if we are to faithfully proclaim "the whole counsel of God", it is necessary to speak of...
  - a. The righteous indignation of God
  - b. The place that is prepared for those who reject the gospel of God's grace
3. As we begin, consider this quotation by Ray Summers in his book, "The Life Beyond"...

*"We would do well to remember that we are dealing with terms in an attempt to describe a condition that almost defies description."*

[First of all, then, consider what we know about...]

### I. THE "ABODE" OF THE WICKED

#### **A. WE KNOW THEY WILL BE "SEPARATED FROM GOD"...**

1. Jesus spoke of such separation on several occasions
  - a. In His sermon on the mount - **Mt 7:21-23**
  - b. In describing the judgment scene - **Mt 25:41-46**
  - c. These passages describe separation from the blessings and fellowship of the Lord's presence
2. Other passages speak of similar separation...
  - a. No inheritance in the kingdom of God for some - **Ep 5:5**
  - b. Shut out of the "eternal city" where there are blessings and fellowship with God - **Re 21:27; 22:15**

#### **B. THE ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE IS CALLED "HELL"...**

1. The Greek word is "geenna" {gheh'-en-nah}
  - a. It represents the Hebrew word "Ge-Hinnom"
  - b. B. W. Johnson comments: "The term Gehenna arose from the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the Canaanites burned human sacrifices to Moloch. After the return of the Jews from the Captivity they made it a place of defilement, where the refuse of the city was thrown and burned. The name was applied to the place of future punishment by the Jews. The word is often used in the New Testament, and always denotes a place of future punishment."
2. Jesus used the term to describe the final place of punishment...
  - a. In His sermon on the mount - **Mt 5:21-22,29-30**

- b. When sending His apostles on the "limited" commission - **Mt 10:28**
- c. In warning against personal stumbling blocks - **Mt 18:8-9**
- d. Perhaps the most vivid use of this term is in **Mk 9:43-48**
  - Jesus evidently used this word which spoke to His contemporaries the horror and abomination of the eternal destiny awaiting the wicked
- 3. This place called "hell" was originally prepared for the devil and his angels (**Mt 25:41**), but will serve as the place of punishment for the wicked as well

### **C. THE ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE IS CALLED "THE LAKE OF FIRE"...**

- 1. Where the "beast" and "false prophet" of Revelation are thrown - **Re 19:20**
- 2. Where the devil (Satan) himself will one day be cast - **Re 20:10**
- 3. The same is said for "death" and "Hades", and all whose names are not written in "the Lamb's book of life" - **Re 20:14-15**
- 4. The future residents of this place are also described in **Re 21:8**

[Such is the place that God has prepared for the eternal destiny of the wicked! To appreciate further the horror of this place, consider...]

## **II. THE "EXPERIENCE" OF THE WICKED**

### **A. WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE IDEA OF "SEPARATION" IS INVOLVED...**

- 1. What such separation from God can be like, no one in this life can really know
  - a. For everyone in this life experiences a degree of God's presence - cf. **Ac 17:28**
  - b. E.g., the physical blessings of the sun, rain, etc. are all manifestations of God's presence in our lives - cf. **Mt 5:45**
- 2. Perhaps those who drift farthest away from God in this life have an "inkling" of what it must be like...
  - a. Those in this life who drift away from God ultimately experience "despair"
  - b. Even as Jesus experienced a sense of being "forsaken", when He suffered that momentary separation from God while bearing the sins of the world on the cross - cf. **Mt 27:46; Ps 22:1**
- 3. If we have ever experienced separation from a loved one, perhaps we can begin to understand what eternal separation from God must be like

### **B. A TERM USED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE IS "DEATH"...**

- 1. The wages of sin is death - **Ro 6:23**
- 2. In **Re 2:11; 20:14**; it is called the "second death", so we know that the experience of the wicked is not simply physical death (which is the "first death")
- 3. Since physical death is a "separation" of body and spirit, it is natural to conclude that the second death is a "separation" of one's soul from His God!

### **C. THE ETERNAL DESTINY IS DESCRIBED AS "DESTRUCTION"...**

- 1. An everlasting "destruction" from the presence of the Lord - **2 Th 1:9**
- 2. "whose end is destruction" - **Ph 3:19**
- 3. The idea of destruction...
  - a. Does **not** require the idea of "annihilation"

- b. It can just as easily describe the condition of existing in a state of "total ruin"  
-- The next description confirms that "annihilation" is not under consideration...

**D. IT IS ALSO DESCRIBED AS "EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT"...**

- 1. Punishment for the wicked is as "everlasting" as the life given the righteous - **Mt 25:46**
- 2. The wicked will be "punished" with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord  
- **2 Th 1:9**

**E. IT IS FURTHER SPOKEN OF IN TERMS OF "OUTER DARKNESS"...**

- 1. As in the punishment of the unfaithful servant - **Mt 25:30**
- 2. And the punishment reserved for false teachers - **2 Pe 2:17; Ju 13**

**F. OTHER TERMS INCLUDE "WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH"...**

- 1. Jesus used these expressions several times - **Mt 25:30; 24:51; 22:13**
- 2. When such terms are used, it is difficult to accept any view that suggests the wicked will simply cease to exist at death, or raised for judgment and then annihilated!

**G. FINALLY, IT IS DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF "FIRE"...**

- 1. The "fire" of Gehenna
- 2. The "lake of fire"
- 3. A fire that is never quenched - **Mk 9:43-48**
- 4. A fire of indignation which "devours" (but does not destroy out of existence) - **He 10:26-27**

**CONCLUSION**

- 1. To some degree we must take terms that describe the destiny of the wicked as figurative
  - a. How could you have darkness where there is fire?
  - b. How could you have worms where there is fire?
- 2. But they are terms anyone can relate to, which describe...
  - a. Something we cannot possibly comprehend with our finite minds
  - b. A place of punishment reserved for those who "do not know God, and...who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" - **2 Th 1:8-9**
- 3. It is natural to revolt against any idea such as "hell"...
  - a. Unfortunately, many have revolted by trying to deny the reality of hell, and sought to offer some other destiny of the wicked beyond this life
  - b. But one cannot define away "hell" without belittling...
    - 1) Either the terribleness of sin
    - 2) Or the holiness and justice of God

A much better way to react to the truth concerning hell is to **accept God's saving grace** offered through His Son Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save us from hell!

# Life After Death

## For Your Further Study

For a much more indepth study of the issues relating to life after death, I recommend the books listed below. While I do not necessarily agree with every conclusion drawn by the authors, they certainly provide food for thought...

- ♦ **The Bible & The Future** (Anthony A. Hoekema, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989)
- ♦ **The Bible On The Life Hereafter** (William Hendriksen, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1995, 224 pages)