

# *The Life that is to Come*



***Compiled for the Trilacoochee church of Christ  
Adult Bible Class, May 2023***

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Introduction: The Life that is to Come was originally developed from an idea of Steve Melton for a Bible study on the afterlife. During the class he taught on a Harmony of the Parables, he noticed that many of the parables spoke of, directly or indirectly, not only of our life in the kingdom of God in this world, but also of our life in the glorified kingdom of God as it is in heaven. He then sat down and compiled a list of scriptures with a few notes from the Gospel accounts, the epistles, and the Book of Revelation. Steve submitted this list and the concept to Paul Blake for further development. This class book is the product of that collaboration. Lessons one and two were adapted with some editing and additions from two outlines written by Mark Copeland. Lesson four was written by Paul Blake specifically for this study. Lessons five, six, and seven were developed from the texts compiled by Steve Melton. Lessons three and eight through fourteen were adapted for this class from the series *Delighting in the Law of the Lord*, Volume Two, written by Paul Blake for the Thursday Indepth Bible Class, and are appropriate studies to include in our scheduled Sunday morning Bible classes. It is the conviction of the elders of this congregation that carefully studying the life that is to come will increase our faith and move us to a closer walk with God while in this world. May the Lord bless us all as we delight in a study of His promise of eternal life in heaven! *(Please note that this class book does not contain all that the word of God has to say on the life that is to come. Please continue your own study of the Bible to increase your understanding of this wonderful matter of faith. prb, 04/23/23)*

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson One: Why Study the Life that is to Come?**

- I. What is the purpose and benefit of such a study?
  - A. Humankind has long been fascinated with the subject of life after death. Such fascination has given rise to such things as:
    1. Interest in the occult,
    2. 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.
  - B. 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. Their knowledge may be limited to what they have heard or seen on religious TV and Web programs. Or, their understanding may be based upon a point of view that is taught by their religion's creed, rather than the Bible itself.
    1. All eight of the New Testament writers speak on either life after death, of the Judgment, of heaven and hell, or of the soul, or all four.
    2. In the Old Testament, the first mention of eternal life is in Genesis, the first book, in Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, and in Job, the oldest book of the Bible.
    3. Life after death, the Judgment, heaven and hell, eternal life, and the soul are spoken of several hundred times in the scriptures, making the life that is to come one of the great themes of the word of God. It is, after all, something God had planned for us before He created this world.
  - C. Understanding terms:
    1. Eschatology - The systematic study of that which the Bible has revealed regarding the future is called eschatology. The term comes from two words: eschatos, meaning last things; and, logos, meaning word or discourse. Therefore, eschatology is a discourse or study about the last things.
    2. Individual eschatology vs. general eschatology -- The field of eschatology can be divided into two general areas:

- a. Individual eschatology -- Pertains to what happens to the individual between death and the final return of Christ, otherwise known as the intermediate state.
- b. General eschatology -- Pertains to what will happen during and after Christ's final coming. This relates to what we might call our eternal destiny.

## **II. HOW ARE WE PROFITED BY A STUDY OF THE LIFE THAT IS TO COME?**

- A. It encourages us to so live that the blessings will be ours - James 1:12; 1Peter 3:8-12
- B. It furnishes us with an incentive and a theme for evangelism - 2Cor. 5:10-11; Acts 17:30; Matt. 16:24-27
- C. It helps one to answer inquirers, and to quiet deceivers - 1Peter 3:15; Titus 1:9-11
- D. It helps to stimulate prayer - Luke 18:1-8; 1Peter 4:7
- E. It can strengthen love for one another - 1Peter 4:7-10; Matt. 25:31-46
- F. It can cause more glory to be given to God - Rom. 2:4; 1Peter 4:11
- G. It can increase motivation to be steadfast in the faith - 1Peter 5:8-9; 1John 3:2-3

### **Questions for Lesson One**

1. What kind of errors can be made when one fails to study what God has said about the life that is to come?
2. What is eschatology?
3. What is the difference between general and individual eschatology?
4. How can knowing more about the life that is to come encourage us to be more faithful?
5. How can knowing more about the life that is to come motivate evangelism?
6. How can knowing more about the life that is to come move us to love one another more?
7. How can our knowledge of the life that is to come increase the glory of God?
8. How can knowing more about the life that is to come move us to persevere through hardship and trials?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson Two: What is the Scriptural Viewpoint of Death?**

Whatever conclusions or convictions we may hold must be in harmony with the proper perspective as taught in the Bible. Some views of life after death appear completely out of harmony with a Biblical teaching regarding death, i.e. “soul sleep” or cessation of existence.

#### **I. ERRING VIEWS OF DEATH AND DYING**

- A. The Christian Scientist believes that “matter, sin, sickness, and death have no basis in reality.” In essence, denying the reality of death.
  - 1. The scriptures often record the event of death: Gen. 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31 (“and he died”), and that is just one chapter near the beginning of the Bible.
  - 2. Either one accepts the one Bible perspective that death is real, or one must dismiss the entire Bible as unreal.
- B. The Escapist fears death and tries to avoid all mention of it.
  - 1. Louis XV forbade his servants to mention the word death in his presence. Some Chinese faiths claim that the mention of death invites it. Escapism can only provide temporary comfort.
- C. The Fatalist or Stoic appears to accept it without any emotion reaction, one way or the other. It is the “so what?” approach to the end of life.
- D. The Overt Infidel curses death and the God (if he concedes that there is one) who allows it. He considers it to be a dirty trick by the universe.
- E. The Despairing Pessimist wearies of life and in despair may commit suicide or engage in self-destructive behaviors. - 1Cor. 6:19-20
- F. The Sentimentalist who gushes over death-bed scenes, grows very sentimental, but actually enjoys the sorrow and suffering.
  - 1. Just as there are persons who are adrenaline junkies and thrill-seekers, so there are persons who revel in misery and pain.
- G. The Religious Fanatic and the Martyr-Complex, not to be confused with true martyrs who faced inevitable death with great courage, but rather a person actually seeks for opportunity to die spectacularly and publically for the Lord - 1Cor. 13:3; Phil. 1:22-24

## **II. BIBLICAL VIEWS OF DEATH AND DYING**

- A. Viewed from God's perspective, death simply means that His children are finally coming home - Psalm 116:15, 72:14
- B. They have been removed from evil and are at peace - Isa. 57:1-2
- C. They are being carried away by angels - Luke 16:22
- D. They are going away to paradise - Luke 23:43
- E. They are making a departure or an exodus - 2Tim. 4:6
  - 1. Paul viewed his impending death as a departure, using a metaphor drawn from un-loosing from moorings preparatory to setting sail.
  - 2. Peter used the Greek word exodos (translated decease), meaning exit, the same word used for the Exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage, to describe his impending death - 2Peter 1:15
- F. They gain something far better than life in this world - Phil. 1:21, 23
- G. They are with Christ, at home with the Lord - Phil. 1:23; 2Cor. 5:6-8
- H. They are asleep in Jesus, yet living with Him - 1Thes. 4:13-14, 5:9-11
  - 1. Paul says that those who sleep in Jesus still live together with Him implying awareness - 1Thes. 5:10
- I. They have a blessed rest from their labors - Rev. 14:12-13
- J. Death is not to be denied or feared, but can be something precious and even longed for, for the blessings it brings.
  - 1. May God give us more grace and greater faith to so view the death of those in Christ, and our own death as well.
  - 2. May we also ever give praise and glory to God, who through His Son has freed us from the fear of death - Heb. 2:14-15

### **Questions for Lesson Two**

- 1. How does the Christian Scientist view death?
- 2. How does the Escapist view death?
- 3. How does the Fatalist/Stoic view death?
- 4. How does the Infidel view death?
- 5. How does the Pessimist view death?
- 6. How does the Sentimentalist view Death?

7. How does the Religious Fanatic view death?
8. How does God view the death of His children?
9. How did Paul view his impending death?
10. How did Peter describe his impending death?
11. How can accepting the Biblical views of death change the way we feel toward the end of our own life?
12. Which Biblical view of death holds the most appeal and encouragement for you?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson Three: What Is The Nature of Human Life?**

Our understanding of the human condition or the nature of human life in this realm will have a powerful impact on our views regarding what happens when one dies. Human life is distinct in all of heaven and earth. We are different from the condition of being Deity and from the state of being an angel. We are also very different than animal and plant life. We are also quite dissimilar to what our condition will be after the Judgment - Heb. 2:9; 1Cor. 15:39, 49. What is our nature in this world?

#### **I. HUMANKIND WAS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD**

- A. Gen. 1:26-28; Ecc. 7:29 - Those instincts for good and noble characteristics are reflections of our Divine “DNA.”

#### **II. LIKE JESUS, HUMANKIND IS A TWO-FOLD BEING**

- A. John 14:1-12 - What Jesus said of Himself will one day be true of us.
  - 1. Chief mystery - 1Tim. 3:16; Matt. 10:24-33
  - 2. Matt. 10:28 - Jesus clearly states the two-fold nature of man.
  - 3. BODY and SOUL.
  - 4. The world unconsciously recognizes this dual nature, in that we see two sciences: PSYCHOLOGY and PHYSIOLOGY, thus dealing with these two sides of man's nature.
- B. Human beings are totally unique and distinct from all other creations of God. We are unique in that we were created with a soul, a thing likened into the soul of God. To provide our souls with individuality, we incarnate into the flesh and are given a physical body and a spiritual body. Thus, while living on earth in our coats of flesh, we have a dual nature, a physical body which we must nurture and provide physical sustenance, and a spiritual body, which is a manifestation of our soul, which we must also nurture and provide spiritual sustenance.

#### **III. BIBLE WORDS THAT ADDRESS THIS TWO-FOLD NATURE:**

- A. Body - (Greek σῶμα soma) is the corporeal or physical aspect of a human being.



- B. Flesh - (Greek σάρξ, sarx) represents the physical awareness, interests, desires, and will of the body, the corporeal aspect of the dual-natured human
- C. Soul - (Hebrew nephesh and Greek psyche). The immortal and incorporeal part of the human being that survives the death of the body
- D. Spirit - The spirit (Hebrew ruach, Greek πνεῦμα, pneuma) is likewise an immaterial component. The self that lives in the identity, attitudes and desires of the soul; the orientation of the will of his incorporeal self.

#### **IV. THESE TWO ARE AT WAR AGAINST EACH OTHER**

- A. The war begins as soon as the spirit begins to assert itself
  - 1. Rom. 7:22-25 - Paul's conflict.
  - 2. James 1:1-4 - Conflict between good and evil.
  - 3. 1Peter 2:11 - abstain from fleshly lust....
  - 4. Rom. 6:17-23 - the old man vs. the new man.
  - 5. Rom. 12:2 - must keep ourselves under control.
  - 6. 1Cor. 9:27 -- must discipline the body, control self.
- B. The struggle is illustrated in Gal. 5:16-25

#### **V. THE SCRIPTURES INDICATE HUMANKIND HAS A SOUL THAT CONTINUES AFTER DEATH**

- A. In the Old Testament, the phrase is “gathered to his people” implies existence after death, and is made in regards to the death of:
  - 1. Abraham - Gen. 25:8
  - 2. Isaac - Gen. 35:29
  - 3. Jacob - Gen. 49:29, 33
  - 4. Aaron - Num. 20:24
  - 5. Moses - Num. 27:13; Deut. 32:50
  - 6. Josiah - 2Kings 22:20; 2Chron. 34:28
  - 7. Samuel was brought back after his death - 1Sam. 28:7-19
  - 8. David looked to one day joining his infant son - 2Sam. 12:22-23
  - 9. The spirit will return to God at death - Ecc. 12:6-7
  - 10. The lament against the king of Babylon speaks of life after death - Isa. 14:9-11
  - 11. The laments against Egypt, Assyria, Elam, etc., who are all consigned to the Pit - Ez. 32:17-32
- B. In the New Testament teaching of Jesus:
  - 1. Man is both body and soul, and the soul can survive murder by a fellow man - Matt. 10:28
  - 2. The account of Lazarus and the rich man - Luke 16:22-23

3. His promise to the thief on the cross - Luke 23:42-43
- C. In the teaching of the apostles:
1. There is the inner man that can be ever renewed, even while the outer man decays - 2Cor. 4:16-18
  2. One can be with the Lord, when he is absent from the body - 2Cor. 5:6-8
  3. There is a part of man that can be out of the body - 2Cor. 12:3
  4. One can be dead, yet still be with Christ - Phil. 1:23
  5. Reference made to the spirits of just men - Heb. 12:22-23
  6. Spirits in prison - 1Peter 3:18-20
  7. Those who are dead, but live in the spirit - 1Peter 4:6
  8. The body is a tabernacle (tent or dwelling place), thus something dwells in it - 2Peter 1:13-14
  9. The unjust are waiting for punishment just like fallen angels - 2Peter 2:4, 9-10
  10. The souls of the slain were capable of crying out with loud voices and of being comforted - Rev. 6:9-11
- D. Humankind has a two-fold nature. There is the outward man; the body of flesh which grows old and eventually dies, and there is the inward man, called at times the soul or spirit, which can be renewed daily and continues to exist past death. There is something in humankind that does continue on after death.

### **Questions for Lesson Three**

1. List three ways in which we have been created in the image of God? What characteristics of humankind best reflect the Divine Nature?
2. What two things make up the two parts of the dual nature of human beings?
3. What two words does the secular world use to describe our dual nature?
4. List the four Bible words used to describe our dual nature, and in your own words define each word.
5. Are both parts of our dual nature cooperative? Why or why not?

6. What is the meaning of the Bible phrase “gathered to his people”?
7. Where did Solomon say that the spirit went after death?
8. Where do the spirits of animals go after they die?
9. What prophet’s spirit appeared to rebuke king Saul?
10. What were the destinations of the rich man and Lazarus upon their deaths?
11. What did Jesus promise the thief who confessed Him on the cross?
12. For faithful Christians, what happens to the inner man while the outer man grows old?
13. Paul and Peter describe the body as a “tabernacle” or tent. How does a tent differ from a house? What occupies our tent?
14. What is the state of fallen angels? How does it differ from the popular view?
15. What part of human beings continues on after death?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson Four: The Ancients Spoke of the Life that is to Come**

Many have argued that immortality is a New Testament idea. However, there multitudes of Old Testament passages that speak of life after death, of the soul and spirit of humankind, of heaven and hell, of the resurrection, and of the book of Life. From the oldest days in the record of the Patriarchs (Genesis) to the oldest book written in the time of the ancients (Job), God’s people have known of the life that is to come.

#### **I. THE BOOK OF LIFE**

##### **A. The Book of Life (Gr. biblos tēs zōēs)**

1. In Biblical times, cities had a register of names for the citizens living there - Psalm 69:28; Isa. 4:3
2. God, figuratively speaking, has been writing names in the book of life “from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 17:8)
3. Jesus Christ talked about Abel who was martyred “from the foundation of the world” - Luke 11:48-51
  - a. Clearly, Abel was the first person to have his name written in the book of life.
  - b. Simply because individuals have their names written in the book of Life does not mandate that they are predestined to eternal life, but rather that they had the hope of eternal life if they believe and obey, as is true for anyone in the Christian Dispensation. This is evident from the fact that they can be “blotted out of the “book of life” - Ex. 32:32-33; Rev. 3:5
  - c. Jesus’ ransom sacrifice alone gets one written in the “book of life,” if they believe and obey the Son of God.
  - d. However, it is remaining faithful to God that keeps them from being “blotted” out of the “book of life” - Phil. 2:12; Heb. 10:26-27; James 2:14-26
  - e. It is Jesus Christ who determines whether the names recorded in the book of life remain there because they belong to Him or are blotted out because they have rejected Him - Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5, 20:15

- B. From Moses to Malachi, the Old Testament speaks of the Book of Life -  
1.Ex. 32:32; Mal. 3:16

## **II. THE SOUL LIVES ON AFTER DEATH**

- A. Psalm 73:24, 86:13, 133:3, 139:8
- B. God permitted the spirit of Samuel to arise to rebuke king Saul -  
1Sam. 28:11-15

## **III. THE RESURRECTION**

- A. Daniel is given a prophecy of a future resurrection - Dan. 12:1-3
- B. Isaiah foresees a day when the LORD God will swallow up death  
forever and the dead will arise - Isa. 25:8, 26:19
- C. Job declared that he anticipated his resurrection and change, and his  
confidence that he would rise to see the Lord - Job 14:1, 14, 19:25-27

### **Questions for Lesson Four**

1. Does the Old Testament speak of the life that is to come?
2. In what books of the Old Testament can one find the earliest mention of the life that is to come?
3. When did God begin writing names in the book of life?
4. When did God know that Abel and other prophets would become faithful martyrs?
5. What must one do to get his name inscribed in the book of life?
6. What is the meaning of the phrase “blot out his name from the Book of Life”?
7. What inspired Old Testament writers were the first and last to speak of the book of life?
8. Name three Old Testament writers who spoke of the resurrection?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson Five: Jesus Christ’s Words on the Life that is to Come**

The New Testament is filled with doctrine regarding the life that is to come. In the words of Jesus Christ and His apostles and inspired Bible writers are found the principles that form the object of our hope and the purpose for life under the sun. We are driven by the conditions of our existence in this world to long for a better life, in a better form, in a better world that has no end. Enough is revealed about that life in scripture to move us to, not only eagerly long for it, but to work diligently, sacrificially to be found pleasing to God, Who has invited us into His home, and has given us the means to get there through His Son.

#### **I. THE LIFE THAT IS TO COME IN THE GOSPEL ACCOUNT OF MATTHEW**

- A. There are two courses one may travel in this life, one of which leads to destruction and the other leads to life - Matt. 7:13-14
- B. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in the world to come: the words of Jesus clearly implying that there is a life to come, the outcome of which depends on our actions in this world - Matt. 12:31-32
- C. We will be judged in the Day of Judgment by the words we speak, clearly indicating that we have a soul that outlives this world - Matt. 12:36-37
- D. Paradox of saving our life to lose it, or losing our life to save it only makes sense if there is a second opportunity to live - Matt. 16:25
  - 1. Matt. 10:39; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24, 17:33; John 12:24-26
- E. Every person will be repaid according to their deeds, meaning that one will be able to experience that repayment in some form after this life - Matt. 16:26-27
- F. Dinner guest who was not prepared teaches that one must make preparations for the life that is to come while in this world. That Jesus is talking about the Judgment and afterlife is evident in His use of the clause “outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” - Matt. 22:2-14
- G. Our condition in heaven will not resemble our conditions in earth; gender differences will have no purpose, our form will be capable of thriving in the presence of God - Matt. 22:29-30; Luke 20:34-39
  - 1. That change in condition will be preceded by a resurrection - Mark 12:25

- H. The patriarchs are still living in some form, because God is the God of the living and not the dead - Matt. 22:31-32; Mark 12:26
- I. The Lord will return and gather the righteous from the earth. There must be a realm from whence the Lord and His angels are coming and to which the gathered righteous will go - Matt. 24:30-31
- J. There will be a day when those who have neglected their duty to others and instead abused them, will be punished forever for it - Matt. 24:45
  - 1. Teeth gnashing is an expression of rage, sorrow, fear, and frustration with the futility and immutability of the situation.
  - 2. The good servants will be promoted, given authority, and enjoy additional blessings.
  - 3. Servants serving servants is our lot in this world; being served will be our lot in the life that is to come.
- K. Ten virgins and lamps illustrate that the purpose of our time in this world is to anticipate and prepare for life after this one - Matt. 25:1-13
  - 1. The friends of the bride and bridegroom kept watch for their coming in order to accompany them to the wedding bower. Those who were not prepared to do so were not considered the friends of the bride and groom - "I do not know you" - vs 12
- L. The parable of the talents makes it evident that there will be an accounting for what one has done, as well as additional matters given to those who are faithful and punishment for those who neglect their duty - Matt. 25:14-30
  - 1. Faithful in a few things, put in charge of many things - vss. 21, 23
- M. Shepherds who sort sheep and goats into separate flocks do so with a purpose for both flocks, purposes that are not compatible for a mixed flock. Sheep follow the shepherd; goats follow their own impulses - Matt. 25:31-46
  - 1. Eternal life for the sheep that followed the Shepherd
  - 2. Eternal punishment for the goats that rebelled against the Shepherd

## **II. THE LIFE THAT IS TO COME IN THE GOSPEL ACCOUNT OF MARK**

- A. Those who are ashamed on Jesus in this will be shunned by the Lord when He returns - Mark 8:35-38
- B. Sacrifices in this life will ensure our entrance into the blessed life that is to come; unwillingness to surrender matters we value in this life will result in suffering in the life to come - Mark 9:43-48
  - 1. It becomes a choice between suffering loss in this world in order to gain so much more in the life to come, and temporarily holding

onto what we have in this life, only to bear with so much more loss and pain in the life that is to come.

2. Note the terms used by Jesus: "The worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched," both of which speak of the eternal nature of this condition.
- C. Give to poor in this world and have treasure in heaven; take up a cross in this life and receive eternal life later - Mark 10:17-21; Luke 18:22
- D. For those not willing to forgive others, God will not forgive them in return. This only has meaning if there is an existence where such a consequence can be applied - Mark 11:25-26
- E. Angels will be very involved in the resurrection and Judgment activities Mark 13:27, 8:38; Matt. 13:49, 16:27, 24:31, 25:31; Luke 9:26, 16:22

### **III. THE LIFE THAT IS TO COME IN THE GOSPEL ACCOUNT OF LUKE**

- A. "All that is concealed or hidden will come to light" is one of the defining characteristics of the life that is to come. God Who is light will know and make manifest everything in the Judgment, and in heaven, His light will suffuse the entire realm - Luke 8:17, 12:2
- B. "The men of Nineveh will judge this generation and condemn it" requires that the men of Nineveh still exist and will be able to judge the Jews - Luke 11:32
- C. Do not fear men who can only kill the body; rather, fear God who can destroy body and soul in hell - Luke 12:5; Matt. 10:28; James 4:12
- D. Whoever confesses Jesus, He will confess that one among the angels. The purpose of this appears to be to prepare the angels for their work in the resurrection and the Judgment.
  1. Luke 12:8 Matt. 10:32; Mark 8:38; 2Tim. 2:12; 1John 2:23
- E. "The Father has chosen to give you the kingdom"; however, we must seek for it, use our earthly means for His work and glory, and focus on the inexhaustible treasures of our home in heaven - Luke 12:31-34
- F. Alert and active servants when Master comes (Jesus) will be rewarded by being asked to recline at the table while the Master serves them - Luke 12:35-43
  1. The Master leaves some servants serving other servants (apostles, elders, teachers, preachers, members). Those who are diligent in their service to others will be put in charge of all of the Master's possessions. Those who do not will suffer for their failure - Luke 12:44-48



- G. The outcome of the Judgment will shock many, including some professed believers. God sets the criteria for judging one as righteous or unrighteous - Luke 13:23-30
- H. He who exalts himself will be humbled; who humbles himself will be exalted addresses how believers treat the disaffected - Luke 14:11-14
  - 1. If we identify with the rich and powerful, we will be humiliated in the resurrection; if we identify with the poor and lowly and treat them well, we will be rewarded in the resurrection.
  - 2. The life that is to come is about symmetry. What happens to one in this life is reflected by its opposite in the end.
  - 3. How one treats others now will be mirrored in the Judgment.
- I. The account of the rich man and Lazarus teaches many lessons about the interim period between this life and eternal life - Luke 16:19-31  
(This account will be addressed in detail in a future lesson)
- J. Parable of the ten minas addresses the future outcomes of the lives of those who labor for the Lord versus those who do not, as well as those who oppose Him - Luke 19:11-27
- K. Heaven and earth pass away, but the words of Jesus never pass away; this indicates that there is a realm beyond the earth and the universe where the words and will of the Lord will continue to have authority - Luke 21:33
- L. As Jesus is granted a kingdom; so will His followers receive a kingdom, elevating their status to the point where they can sit with the Lord as equivalents to eat and drink at His table, and to sit on thrones exercising rule and judgment - Luke 22:28-30
  - 1. Matt. 8:11, 19:28; Luke 14:15; 1Cor. 6:2; Rev. 3:21, 19:9
- M. Jesus will be seated at the right hand of the power of God after His resurrection and ascension - Luke 22:69

#### **IV. THE LIFE THAT IS TO COME IN THE GOSPEL ACCOUNT OF JOHN**

- A. Jesus gives living water; a fountain of water springing up unto eternal life. It is the message of salvation that will be given to all willing to partake - John 4:10, 13-14, 7:38
- B. Those sowing and those reaping will receive wages and fruit for eternal life. The wages are the reward for the labor; the fruit are the souls that have been saved for the harvest - John 4:36
- C. The Father and Son have delivered words to humankind, who, when they believe and all that implies, has eternal life and not judgment and condemnation; they pass from death to eternal life - John 5:21-29

- D. Bread of life, like the living water, saves and sustains the soul by the Word of God; those who receive it have eternal life and will be raised up at the last day - John 35-40
- E. Those who keep the word of the Lord will never taste death - John 8:51
- F. Jesus is the resurrection and life; whoever believes in Jesus will never die. This speaks of the resurrection from being dead in sin to being alive in Christ; thus, he need never die again spiritually - John 11:25-26
- G. Jesus was given the authority to offer eternal life - John 17:1-3
- H. "My kingdom is not of this world" and "for this cause I have come into the world" express the fact that Jesus came to this world from another realm, and that this world has no power over His kingdom - John 18:36-37; Luke 17:20-21

### **Questions for Lesson Five**

1. What do the conditions of our existence in this world drive us to do?
2. What is the ultimate destination for humankind that God and Jesus planned and worked for from the foundation of the world?
3. How many writers of Gospel accounts record the teaching of Jesus on the life that is to come?
4. Explain the paradox of gain our life to lose it and lose our life to gain it.
5. In what way are the faithful Patriarchs still living?
6. How will sacrificing a limb or an eye impact our condition in the afterlife?
7. What will be the reward of alert and active servants when the Lord returns?
8. What is the meaning of the paradox: he who exalts himself will be humbled; he who humbles himself will be exalted?
9. List three facts about the interim period between death and the resurrection that are taught in the account of the rich man and Lazarus.
10. What is the living water that gives and sustains life?
11. What is the bread of life that gives and sustains life?
12. Explain Jesus' statement: "My kingdom is not of this world." Where is the kingdom of the Lord?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson Six: The Inspired Apostles and New Testament Authors’ Words on the Life that is to Come**

- A. There will be a vast difference between our present form and the form we will occupy in the life that is to come - 1Cor. 15:35-58
  - 1. Vs. 38 - God will give us a body just as He wishes; it will measure up to His purpose for creating and saving us.
  - 2. Vss. 42-43 - In the resurrection from the dead, it is buried as a physical body; it is raised as a spiritual body.
  - 3. Vs. 49 - It will be in the likeness of heavenly forms.
  - 4. Vss. 51-52 - At the last trumpet we will be changed, and the dead will be raised imperishable and immortal.
  - 5. Vss. 58 - Steadfastness in this world is rewarded with this eternal form in the life that is to come.
- B. We have a permanent home for our soul prepared for us by God, eternal in the heavens, as opposed to a temporary tent as a house for our spirit in this world - 2Cor. 5:1-9
  - 1. Paul contrasts our earthly body as the dwelling for our spirit versus the heavenly form as the dwelling of our soul after the resurrection, highlighting our dual nature: we are body and spirit.
- C. We will appear before the Judgment seat of Christ; recompensed for deeds done by our spirit while in the flesh - 2Cor. 5:10
- D. No longer slaves, but sons, heirs of God to receive our inheritance in the life that is to come after this one - Gal. 4:6-7; Rom. 8:16-18
  - 1. There is no reasonable comparison between the life that now is and the life that is to come.
- E. The physical realm is subject to age and decay (the two laws of thermodynamics), but the spiritual realm is eternal, greater, and more powerful. Likewise the contrast between our life here and our life then - 2Cor. 4:16-18
- F. Our salvation, the current blessings we enjoy in Christ, our adoption as children of God, and inheritance are through Jesus were all planned before the world was created, and will not see complete fulfillment until we arrive in the life that is to come - Eph. 1:3-14

- G. We are no longer strangers but fellow citizens in the kingdom, members of the household of God, temple of the Lord, and a dwelling for God in the Spirit- Eph. 2:19
1. There is a fulfilled condition to our present state of being citizens of the kingdom and members of the family of God; that is, we can only share in those honors in a limited way in this physical world, but in heaven, we will enjoy them in an absolute and fulfilled way.
- H. Though we live in this world as pilgrims, our citizenship is in heaven; we will arrive there after the Lord has transformed our bodies to be like His glorious body - Phil. 3:20-21
- I. Christ seated at the right hand of God; when we are raised, we will be manifested with Him in glory - Col. 3:1-4
- J. Those asleep in Jesus will rise at His second coming, and both the living and the dead will meet the Lord in the air, and always be with the Lord - 1Thes. 4:13-18
- K. Jesus will be revealed in flaming fire from heaven with angels; eternal destruction for those who do not obey the Gospel away from the presence of the Lord and His glory - 2Thes. 1:7-10
1. This speaks of the perspective of the disobedient; the Judgment will be terrifying, and their eternal dwelling will never be graced by the presence of the Lord.
  2. The righteous will be validated by the Lord and vindicated before the lost.
- L. If we died with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will deny us - 2Tim. 2:11-12
- M. Just as Israel failed to enter the promise of the Promised land by their disobedience, we are warned that disobedience will keep us from enjoying our entrance into the promised eternal rest - Heb. 4:1, 11
- N. Jesus is our High Priest in heaven forever; the more perfect tabernacle in heaven; and, Christ entered heaven to appear in the presence of God on our behalf - Heb. 5:5-6, 9:11, 24
1. The Divine realm is where our sins are actually forgiven. Our service to God and our prayers in this world reach into the spiritual realm to appeal for salvation from our sins and blessings to sustain us.
- O. With the exception of those who are alive upon the Lord's return, all of humankind must die, and after this comes the Judgment. Therefore, the Judgment is more inevitable than death - Heb. 9:27
- P. Those who sin willfully have nothing awaiting them except the expectation of Judgment - Heb. 10:26-27

1. It will be terrifying for the rebellious and disobedient to face the God in the Judgment - Heb. 10:31
  2. Even those who do not believe in God, accountability, or the Judgment cannot escape it. Unbelief will not prevent their sentence from being delivered to them.
- Q. Pursue peace with all people and holiness without which no one will see God - Heb. 12:14
- R. You have come to Mount Zion, city of Living God, heavenly Jerusalem, myriads of angels, general assembly of the church enrolled in heaven - Heb. 12:22-23
1. We share this fellowship with heaven in a limited way here. In the life that is to come, we will enjoy fellowship in a fulfilled manner.
- S. Judgment will be merciless to those who show no mercy - James 2:13
- T. Judgment is inevitable, yet it will come at an unexpected time. God's patience with the lost is the only thing that has kept it from happening to this point - 2Peter 3:3-12
- U. The Judgment is eagerly anticipated by the righteous who view it as the beginning of their eternal salvation in heaven - 2Peter 3:13-15
- V. The world is passing away and its lust; one who does the will of God lives forever - 1John 2:17
- W. This is the promise God made to us: eternal life - 1John 2:25
- X. When the Lord appears, we will be like Him - 1John 3:1-3
- Y. Angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper dwelling places are kept in eternal restraints, in darkness for the judgment of that great day with eternal fire - Jude 6; 2Peter 2:4
- Z. To him who is able to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with that great day - Jude 24

### **Questions for Lesson Six**

1. List some of the differences between our present form and our eternal form.
2. What is meant by: we have a dual nature?
3. Will anyone be exempt from appearing in the presence of God for Judgment?
4. In which realm are we pilgrims? In which realm are we citizens?
5. Who will we resemble in our transformed bodies in heaven?
6. When will the dead resurrect?

7. What kept Israel from entering the Promised Land? Does that same danger exist for Christians today?
8. Where are the true tabernacle, temple, altar, and High Priest?
9. Is there another way for those who sin willfully to be saved?
10. According to the Hebrew writer, with what heavenly dwellers are Christians currently in fellowship with today?
11. Judgment will be merciless to whom?
12. Do the righteous fear or anticipate the Judgment? Why did you answer this way?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson Seven: Revelation and the Life that is to Come**

- A. 1:7- Jesus is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, including those who crucified Him. This mandates two conditions:
  - 1. First, that Jesus Who ascended from this realm to heaven is returning from heaven to this realm.
  - 2. And second, that those who have been long dead since the crucifixion will be able to see Him. Remember, the dead will rise upon His return.
- B. 1:8 - He is Alpha and Omega, who is and who was and who is to come. This is the language that describes only eternal Deity, indicating that the realm of Deity is not bound by the constraints of time.
- C. 1:18 - Jesus has the keys of death and Hades. The key holder is the one who controls or has power over what is bound. The Lord has power over death and the realm of the spirits who await the Judgment.
- D. 2:7 - The one who overcomes is granted the right to eat from the tree of life in the Paradise of God. It is interesting to note that humankind's access to the tree of life was lost by Adam and Eve while it was in the Garden of Eden. When we next read of it, the tree of life is in the Paradise of God. Its final and eternal location will be by the pure, crystal river of the water of life in heaven (22:2).
- E. 2:10-11 - Be faithful until death and you will be given the crown of life; whoever overcomes will not be hurt by second death.
  - 1. It is evident that the reward will come after this life, clearly implying that there is a life after this one.
  - 2. Those who overcome sin that brings spiritual death in this life will not be punished with eternal death (separation from God) in the life that is to come.
- F. 2:26-28 - One who overcomes and keeps My deeds until the end, will be given authority and rule over the nations, they shall rule with authority, and given the morning star.
  - 1. The morning star is the harbinger of a new day. The day under consideration in the context is contrasted with the days of hardship they were enduring. They will awaken in a new day, an eternal day, a far superior day.

- G. 3:5 - Who overcomes will be clothed in white garments, name in the book of life, and confess his name before Father and angels, an echo of previous resurrection promises given by the Lord during His ministry.
- H. 3:11-12 - No one will take his crown; it is a reign that will not end.
1. The Lord will make him a pillar in the temple of God, and he not go out of it; he will become a permanent part of the permanent structure of the eternal temple of God in heaven.
  2. The Lord will write on him the name of God and new Jerusalem; it is a form of a permanent mark, seal, stamp, or brand that assures the one who has it that he will never cease belonging in the realm of God.
- I. 3:20-21 - He stands at the door and knocks and will come in and dine together; grant to sit with Jesus on His throne, as Jesus sat with His Father on His throne. Note who we are sitting with.
1. Dining together is a declaration of fellowship and mutual obligation to each other.
  2. In ancient days, supplicants and courtiers would stand in the presence of the king; to sit in the presence of the king was a manifestation of disrespect. To be invited by the king to sit in his presence was a very high honor. To be invited to sit with the king on his dais was the highest honor possible. Jesus is saying that those who overcome will be given by God the highest possible honor in heaven, an honor not given to angels, but only to the holy elders who sit on thrones around God.
- J. 4:1-11 - Read and discuss the throne room of God and the worship that takes place within it.
- K. 5:1-14 - Read and discuss the throne room of God and the worship that takes place within it.
- L. 7:9-12 - Read and discuss the worshipers around the throne of God.
1. Note the diversity of persons worshiping before the throne of God. Beings of power, angels, righteous patriarchs, righteous or forgiven Jews under the Law of Moses, righteous Gentiles who were a law unto themselves, Gentiles whose ignorance God winked at, babies and children who die before becoming accountable, mentally disabled persons whose minds never develop to the point of accountability, et al. I suspect that Christians may be in a minority among the host of heaven.
  2. Note the seven fold blessing of verse 12: Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might.



- M. 7:13-17 - Those washed by the blood of the Lamb before the throne of God, they serve Him in the temple. He will spread His tabernacle over them, which serves as an image of the welcoming image of His home that is extended to cover and shelter them.
1. No longer thirst or hunger, no heat from sun, the welcoming Lamb Who gave access to His home in the center, springs of water of life, and wipe every tear from their eyes are all images of the welcome that awaits the saved in heaven. All of these are taken from the needs of weary travelers when they receive a welcome invitation into the tent or home of another. Food, drink, fellowship, water for refreshing and washing away the weariness and soil of the arduous journey.
- N. 11:19 - Temple of God in heaven opened, and the ark of the covenant is in the heavenly temple; this indicates that the earthly temple and the earthly symbols of the covenant will come to an end, but the eternal temple and covenant cannot be destroyed. It is the true temple and covenant - Heb. 8:1-2
- O. 19:20-21 - The beast and the false prophet are thrown into the fire. These are Judgment images that demonstrate that none of the great powers of the earth (political, theological, intellectual, or militant) can resist being consigned to Perdition eternally.
- P. 20:1-3, 10 - A powerful angel militant has the key to abyss, threw the Adversary into Perdition. Not even Satan has the power to resist being sentenced and sent to hell. Note that the angel who bound and punished Satan is not the Father or Son. Satan is not even strong enough to resist an angel sent to bind him.
- Q. 20:11-15 - The Judgment scene: the dead small and great before throne for Judgment, they were judged from books according to their deeds, death and Hades are no longer needed and so have been cast into lake of fire, and those not written in book of life referred to frequently since the beginning.
- R. 21:1-27 - Read and discuss the images of heaven.
- S. 22:1-21 - Read and discuss the blessings reserved in heaven. It is overwhelming the amount of blessings that await us!

### **Questions for Lesson Seven**

1. "Every eye will see Him" means what two things must be true:
2. What power do the keys of Hades and death give to the Lord?

3. List the three Biblical locations of the tree of life.
4. What is the meaning of the morning star?
5. What is the meaning of being made a pillar in the temple of God?
6. What does it mean to be allowed to sit in the presence of the King?
7. Make a list of all of the groups of beings who will be in heaven.
8. List the images of welcome given in Revelation chapter seven.
9. Who is stronger: Satan or the angel sent to bind him? What does that say about his present power?
10. Why are death and Hades no longer needed after the Judgment?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson Eight: After Death and Before the Judgment**

- A. Death is a certainty - Heb. 9:27
  - 1. We are frequently reminded of this by the obituary section of the newspaper, funeral processions, and neighborhood cemeteries.
  - 2. Health, science and clean living can only postpone it temporarily.
- B. It comes to righteous as well as to wicked
  - 1. Luke 16 - rich man and Lazarus
  - 2. It is the great equalizer
  - 3. Sting of death for the wicked - 1Cor. 15:55-56
- C. Death is not the end of existence; it is a change of existence. Death is from thanatos, meaning “a separation.”
  - 1. Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body in this world by means of the limits of the body
  - 2. Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God by means of sin in this world
  - 3. Eternal death is the separation of the soul from God forever in hell by means of the Judgment
- D. Everyone accepts the inevitability of death; most people are ignorant of what comes after.
  - 1. Wishful thinking causes many to hope for oblivion.
  - 2. The lost will wish for that throughout eternity.
  - 3. Greeks - Netherworld; Taoists - 113 hells; Catholics' Purgatory; Jehovah's Witnesses - Oblivion; some misguided brethren - there is no Hades or Judgment Day

#### **I. DEFINITIONS**

- A. HADES - Greek: ades - "not seen; region of departed spirits; aidws - "the all-receiving."
  - 1. Waiting place of the dead, both righteous and sinner alike.
  - 2. An intermediate between dying and judgment.
  - 3. Used 10 times in the New Testament.
    - a. Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15 - Speaks of the deserved destination of Capernaum.
    - b. Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:27; Rev. 1:8 - Christ's power over it
    - c. Luke 16:19-31 - describes it.

- d. Rev. 6:8, 20:13 - indicates it is only temporary - Jude 6
- B. SHEOL - Hebrew for Hades - sa'al - "the deep"; s'l - "the inquired after"
  - 1. Used 28 times to mean the Hadean realm; the grave as a condition, not the hole in the ground.
  - 2. Used 28 times in the Old Testament to mean Hell; context will determine whether it is death or Hell
- C. PARADISE - a realm of Hades for the righteous dead; paradeisos - "a park or garden of pleasure. Literally "near God."
  - 1. Originally used to mean the Garden of Eden - Gen. 2:8
  - 2. Metaphorically Abraham's bosom - Luke 16
  - 3. Possibly the third heaven - 2Cor. 12:1-4
- D. SAHAT, BOR - sahat, bor - Hebrew for the Pit - Used 11 times.
  - 1. Means the realm of the unrighteous dead awaiting judgment.
- E. TARTARUS - A realm of Hades designed to be the waiting place of wicked angels.
  - 1. Tartarus - "pits of darkness"
  - 2. Jude 6 - a part of Hades; 2Peter 2:4
- F. GEHENNA - geenna - "valley of Einnom" - During the time of wicked kings of Judah, children were regularly sacrificed by fire in this valley near Jerusalem.
  - 1. Came to mean a place of unquenchable fire; used 12 times in the New Testament.
- G. ABADDON - abaddon - "destruction" - Hebrew term for hell - Job 26:6

## II. SEEING THE "UNSEEN"

- A. The Bible teaches much concerning the unseen realm.
- B. Best description is in Luke 16:19-31
  - 1. There is consciousness; the denizens sensed pain, could think, and retained their personal identities - Vs. 28
  - 2. Non-corporeal state - the soul is in anguish, not a body; 1Cor. 15 - the incorruptible form is not received until after Second Coming.
  - 3. The justice of God is served; the righteous are blessed - Vs. 25
  - 4. Death is the only entrance requirement - Vs 22.
  - 5. A place of desperate torment - Vs. 24, 27-28
  - 6. Within view of Paradise an added torment - Vs 23.
  - 7. Impossibly separated from the blessed realm.
  - 8. Can determine which realm one will dwell in - 2Cor. 5:10
  - 9. Instruction can be received, but it brings no comfort.
    - a. Vss. 25-26, 29, 31 - Nor can anything be done about it.
  - 10. One can remember his own past existence.

11. Understand that this deals with Hades from the standpoint of the unrighteous, not from the righteous in Paradise.
    - a. Consider what is implied about Abraham's bosom. (Paradise)
  12. Everything said in Luke 16:19-31 must be accepted as inspired truth. Some pass this off as a fable Jesus was relating.
- C. Matt. 16:18 - Hadean realm will lose when it confronts the church.
1. Cannot hold the righteous when Christ calls them - John 5:28-29
    - a. Christ will penetrate the walls and reclaim the righteous.
  2. Rev. 1:18 - Christ's power over death.
  3. Rev. 20:13-14 - It is only temporary; will end with the judgment.
  4. Christ once spent time in the Hadean realm - Acts 2:27-31.
    - a. Bruised heel - Gen. 3:15.
    - b. Tasted everything men taste in order to be a perfect Captain of our salvation - Heb. 2:9-10, 14-17
  5. Little is known of the Paradise realm of Hades.
    - a. Rev. 2:7 - Reward for the righteous dead. The tree of life is there.
    - b. 2Cor. 12:4 - It is not possible for a mortal man to describe or understand - Vs. 2-4
    - c. Luke 16:25 - It is a place of comfort, where the saved will be in company with all of the righteous
    - d. Luke 23:42 - Christ has authority to determine who goes there - Matt. 28:18 (See chart on page 73)

Conclusion:

- A. Direction determines destination. Judgment Day is only sentencing day.
  1. In life, one can change from good to evil and from evil to good; death ends that possibility.
  2. I believe the greatest comfort of Paradise is in knowing that after the Judgment, we will be with God forever.
  3. The greatest torment of the pit is in knowing that it is only a prelude to an eternity in Hell.

### **Questions for Lesson Eight**

1. Who will not experience physical death?
2. If death is not the end of existence, then what is it?
3. List the three forms of death talked about in the Bible.

4. What is Hades?
5. What is Paradise?
6. What is Sheol?
7. Are the dwellers in Hades conscious?
8. Do they have a form or body for their spirit?
9. Can one change his spiritual standing when in Hades?
10. Is Hades eternal or temporary? Why did you answer this way?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson Nine: Questions on After Death and Before Judgment**

#### **I. WHAT SHOULD BE A CHRISTIAN’S ATTITUDE TOWARD DEATH?**

- A. Precious in the sight of God - Psalm 116:15
  - 1. Viewed from God's perspective, death simply means that His children are coming home to stay
- B. Removed from evil and at peace - Isa. 57:1-2
- C. A saved being carried away by angels to bliss - Luke 16:22
- D. Leaving earth for Paradise - Luke 23:43
- E. A departure or exodus - 2Tim. 4:6; 2Peter 1:15
- F. Gaining something far better than living in this realm - Phil. 1:21, 23
- G. To be with Christ, at home with the Lord - 2Cor. 5:6-8
- H. Asleep in Jesus, yet living with Him - 1Thes. 4:13-14, 5:9-11
- I. Blessed rest from their labors - Rev. 14:12-13

#### **II. ARE SOULS CONSCIOUS IN HADES?**

- A. The Scriptures often represent death as a sleep
  - 1. Matt. 27:52; John 11:11-14; Acts 7:60; 1Cor. 15:6, 18
- B. Other passages seem to say that the dead have no consciousness
  - 1. Psalm 30:9, 115:17; Ecc 9:5, 10; Isa. 38:18-19
- C. Answering passages where 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. It speaks of the body, not the soul
  - 2. The term sleep is often a figurative reference to rest - Rev. 14:13
    - a. Sleep implies a ceasing of participation
    - b. Sleep is a prelude to an awakening
    - c. Sleep became a euphemism for death because of the sleep-like appearance of the body
- D. Answering passages which suggest the dead have no consciousness
  - 1. Notice first that these passages are in the Old Testament when revelation of God's truth was not yet complete. The concept of life after death was not as developed nor revealed as is in the New Testament

2. In some cases, the statements are made from an earthly perspective. This is especially true where the theme is "Life under the sun"
  - a. When one looks at things purely from an earthly perspective, it does not appear the dead know anything
- E. Passages that clearly teach consciousness of souls after death
  1. Luke 16:22-26, 23:43 - How can Paradise be a state of unconsciousness?
  2. Rev. 6:9-11 - Can souls cry out if they are not conscious?
  3. Rev. 7:9-17 - Can souls praise God if they are not conscious?
  4. Rev. 20:4-6 - Can souls reign with Christ when unconscious?

### **III. WILL SOULS RECOGNIZE ONE ANOTHER IN HADES?**

- A. Isa. 14:3-4, 9-11, 16; Ez. 32:17-32; Luke 16:19-31; 1Thes. 2:19-20
- B. 2Cor. 4:14; Matt. 8:11-12; 1Sam. 28:3-19; Matt. 17:1-5

### **Questions for Lesson Nine**

1. With the exception of those who are present for the Second Coming of the Lord, what will every human being do?
2. Physical death is...?
3. Spiritual death is...?
4. Eternal death is...?
5. What is Hades?
6. What is Sheol?
7. What is Paradise?
8. In this world, one has a physical body; after the Judgment, one receives an incorruptible form. Where does one's spirit dwell in between death and the Judgment?
9. Are the dead unconscious? Prove your answer.
10. From Luke 16:19-31 give five characteristics of the Hadean realm.



11. List five perspectives of the faithful Christian toward death.
12. How do these viewpoints differ from those of the unsaved?
13. Will souls recognize one another in Hades? Prove your answer.
14. How does God view the passing of the righteous?
15. What will be the greatest source of comfort in Paradise? What will be the corresponding source of sorrow in Torments?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

## **Lesson Ten: The Nature of Heaven**

- A. We frequently mention heaven in our conversations and classes, sermons and songs, poetry, prayer, and praise.
  - 1. We dream about it, hope for it, long for it, and live for it.
  - 2. We get momentary glimpses in the face of someone newly baptized, in the happiness of newlyweds, in the gaze of a mother at a newborn child
  - 3. We get the fleeting feeling of being there when we experience peace and fellowship as we worship in harmony with precious fellow saints
  - 4. But like catching a glimpse of something out of the corners of our eyes, it is quickly gone, and the harder we look for it, the more certain we feel that it wasn't really there in the first place.
  - 5. But it is enough to keep us looking, longing, and living for it.
- B. Why are we here? To get ready for there
  - 1. We are on a journey, a quest, if you will - Heb. 11:13-16
  - 2. So, what are we looking for?
- C. Questions:
  - 1. Is heaven real?
  - 2. What will heaven be?
  - 3. Who will be in heaven?
  - 4. What will we be in heaven?
  - 5. What will we do in heaven?
  - 6. Will we know one another in heaven?

### **I. IS HEAVEN REAL?**

- A. More real than this world
  - 1. No one outside of the Body of Christ knows this more than quantum physicists
  - 2. Our apprehension of matter and energy is based on our perceptions, not necessarily reality
  - 3. Which is more real: something that decays and is easily destroyed, or something that cannot be changed forever?
- B. It is not a fairy tale made up to manipulate the gullible
  - 1. Your senses are not designed to apprehend the spiritual realm

- a. The Bible is the point of impact where the spiritual world intersects with the material world
- 2. John 18:36; Luke 17:20-21 - The kingdom of Heaven exists in us by faith in this world, the only means by which it impacts the physical world
- 3. It cannot be seen with a telescope or approached by the space shuttle, but it is still real.
- C. Ever think of the consequences of denying the existence of heaven?
  - 1. Denial of the existence of heaven is an indictment of Jesus
    - a. Matt. 6:19-21; John 14:1-2
    - b. What kind of benevolent leader lies to his followers?
  - 2. Denial of heaven makes the apostles into superstitious fools
    - a. Col. 1:5; 1Peter 1:3-4
  - 3. Denial of heaven makes the Old Testament heroes of faith into bearded old men running around the wilderness in bathrobes
    - a. Heb. 11:10, 15-16
  - 4. Denial of heaven makes Christians appear pathetic dreamers
    - a. 1Cor. 15:13-19
  - 5. Denial of heaven makes one into a hopeless materialist with self-inflicted blindness
    - a. Even astro-physicists are objective enough to live by the motto: "If it can exist in theory, it must exist somewhere in the universe."
- D. The word of God treats heaven as a real place
  - 1. Paradise - 2Cor. 12:2-4; Luke 23:43; Rev. 2:7
  - 2. The prepared place - 1Cor. 2:9
  - 3. The New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven - Rev. 21:1-2
  - 4. New heaven and new earth - 2Peter 3:13
  - 5. The Bible is portrayed as a book of wisdom that has served as a guide for millions of people throughout history, it has been influential in the development of western civilization, and it is the basis of our understanding of civil rights.
  - 6. It also speaks of heaven frequently. If there is no heaven, it is suspect in its entirety. Accept it or reject it entirely.
  - 7. If one is not going to be spiritually honest with himself, at least do not be intellectually dishonest.
  - 8. Proving that there is no heaven is as futile an exercise as trying to prove there is no God

## II. WHAT WILL HEAVEN BE?

- A. Perhaps the greatest appeal of heaven is in what will NOT be there.
  - 1. Rev. 21:3-4, 27
  - 2. There will be no sin or temptation in heaven - Rev. 20:10
  - 3. The ungodly and unkind will not be there - Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5
  - 4. No night there - Rev. 22:5
  - 5. No work and weariness - Heb. 4:9
  - 6. No end to the peace and happiness
    - a. Matt. 25:46; Rev. 22:5; 1Thes. 4:17; 2Cor. 4:16 - 5:1
- B. What will it be like? Impossible to describe accurately or adequately
  - 1. A place where true treasure is kept secure
    - a. Matt. 6:19-21, 5:12; Col. 3:23-24
    - b. If you imagine heavenly treasure as material wealth, you do not understand heaven or what is truly to be valued
    - c. Heavenly treasure does not appeal to the desires of the flesh, eyes, or pride
    - d. Heavenly treasures have nothing to do with property, buildings, gold, jewelry, or boxes of cash
    - e. Eternally in love, always at peace, forever happy, unending relationships with God and all of His children, infinite beauty.
    - f. If you want to go to heaven simply because of a mansion, gold streets and jeweled gates, you may not get there.
  - 8. A place where we will meet the heroes of faith and all of the good people from all time - Rev. 21:9-10, 22-26
  - 9. A place of beauty that cannot be imagined or described adequately in this world - Rev. 22:1-5
- B. Sadly, not all will enter heaven
  - 1. Matt. 7:13-14 - Addressed to the professed people of God who believed they were living faithfully under Law of Moses.
  - 2. Heb. 3:12-19 - In case there is any doubt.
  - 3. The local church directory is not the Book of Life.

### Questions for Lesson Ten

1. Why are we in this world?
2. Why can't heaven be found in this world?
3. List three consequences of denying the existence of heaven.
4. List three things that will not be in heaven.
5. What is the true heavenly treasure?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson Eleven: Our Life in Heaven**

#### **I. WHO WILL BE IN HEAVEN?**

- A. It is the home of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit
  - 1. Psalm 103:19; Ez. 48:31-35; Rev. 21:1-3, 22, 22:1-3
  - 2. Before the Judgment Day, God's throne is in heaven; after that it will be in the New Jerusalem with His children
  - 3. Jesus - John 14:1-3; Heb. 9:24
  - 4. Holy Spirit - John 1:32; 15:26
  - 5. In heaven, we will spend eternity with God - 1Thes. 4:17
- B. Angels will be there - Rev. 5:11
- C. Bible heroes of faith will be there - Heb. 11:32-35
  - 1. Abraham - Luke 16:22-23; Heb. 11:10, 16
  - 2. Apostle Paul - 2Tim. 4:7-8.
  - 3. There are godly men and women whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life and in the pages of the Bible: Mary, the mother of Jesus, Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla, Phoebe, Epaphroditus, Stephen, Aquila, the Ethiopian Eunuch, Andrew, etc.
- D. Who else?
  - 1. We must understand that for all persons who are accountable, only those who obey the gospel will be saved.
    - a. Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16, 2:38; 1Peter 3:21; John 3:3-5
    - b. Luke 10:20; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 21:27, 20:11-12
  - 2. Only the saved that persevere until the end will be saved
    - a. Rom. 2:7 - In this verse we find three things:
      - 1) They persevere - Matt. 10:22, 24:13; Gal 6:9; Heb. 10:35-36
      - 2) They do what is good - Matt. 25:31-40
      - 3) They seek for glory; they do not want to miss heaven, and they look diligently to make sure they find it - 2Tim. 2:15; Matt. 13:45-46
    - b. Those who keep the "Christian virtues" - 2Peter 1:10-11
    - c. Psalm 15:1-5 - who may dwell with God
    - d. Matt. 5:3 - the poor in Spirit
    - e. Matt. 5:8 - the pure in heart
    - f. Rev. 2:7 - Those who overcome

- g. Rev. 14:13 - the dead who die in the Lord
  - h. Rev. 22:14; Matt. 7:21 - the obedient
  - i. Eph. 5:23-27 - the church will be there
  - j. These are the “worthy” - Rev. 3:4; 2Thes. 1:5
- E. Most of us know godly men and women whom we look forward to seeing one day. Parents, grandparents, a child who passed from this life, dedicated elders, faithful Gospel preachers who helped to build your faith, brothers and sisters in Christ whose kindness and godly example moved you

## **II. WILL BABIES BE THERE?**

- A. Simply stated, yes.
- 1. There are those who are in a saved condition and those who are in a “safe” condition
  - 2. That term is not used specifically in scripture, but it describes our understanding concerning those who never obeyed the gospel because they were incapable of the faith and obedience necessary to submit to God’s will. This applies to infants, small children, and those whose mental capacity prohibits them from adequately understanding.
    - a. They are not saved from their sins; they have no sins.
    - b. They are safe, because they are innocent of sin.
  - 3. Matt. 19:14, 18:3; 2Sam. 12:23
- B. Will God, who is the righteous, loving, merciful, and infinitely wise Judge, deliver the right ruling in this matter? - Gen. 18:25

## **III. WHAT WILL WE BE IN HEAVEN?**

- A. We will be like Him - 1John 3:2
- 1. We don’t know what we will be like; it has not yet been revealed
  - 2. We do know this; we shall see Jesus as He is and be like Him
  - 3. 1Cor. 15:50-51 - We shall be changed. We have to change, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.
  - 4. Phil. 3:20-21 - Our bodies will be transformed to conform to His eternal body
  - 5. Rev. 1:12-17 - The vision of Jesus that John saw on Patmos
  - 6. Matt. 17:2-3 - The transfiguration of Jesus when Moses and Elijah appeared to Him.
  - 7. Ex. 34:29-30; Dan. 12:1-3
- B. We will be perfect - Heb. 12:23; Matt. 5:48; Rev. 7:16-17

1. All the imperfections we struggle with in life, temptations, failure, sin, disappointments, worries, stress, and mistakes in judgment - will not be there. We will be as God intended for us to be from before the beginning.
- C. We will be eternal.
  1. 1Cor. 15:52-53; 1John 2:25; Rev. 21:4
- D. We will not be governed by earthly relationships.
  1. They were only given to facilitate human interaction in this world; they will not be needed nor relevant in the world to come.
  2. 1Peter 3:1-2, 7 - On this earth, we have roles and duties within our relationships to help each other prepare for heaven.
  3. Luke 20:35-36 - We know that the purpose of marriage and the male/female subjection on this earth is to create and raise a family, which will not be relevant in heaven.
  4. Gal. 3:26-29 - In scripture there is nothing to indicate subjection to one another will continue in heaven as it is here on earth.

#### **IV. WHAT WILL WE DO IN HEAVEN?**

- A. We will worship God for all of eternity
  1. Rev. 4:10-11, 7:9-12, 15:2-4, 21:22
- B. "Won't that be boring?"
  1. We do not know exactly how we will worship Him, but we can be certain it will not be boring. It will be eternal bliss and joy.
  2. A more appropriate consideration might be what makes worship boring to some here in this world?
  3. More often than not it has to do with our attitudes (improper).
  4. In heaven there will be no improper attitudes. A perfect realm does not harbor improper attitudes.
- C. Rev. 7:15, 22:3 - We will continue to serve God.

#### **V. WILL WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER IN HEAVEN?**

- A. There are two schools of thought on this.
  1. Those who believe we will not recognize each other say this because of the memories of and relationships with loved ones while on earth.
    - a. They reason that if we recognize one another and remember our relationship on earth, we will also remember those who are not there, and it will be sad to know who is not there.

- b. Also considered is Matt. 22:30, which speaks to the fact that in heaven there will be no marriage and we will simply be “like angels of God in heaven.”
    - c. If we know each other in heaven, we will know our mates and want to maintain the earthly relationship.
  - 2. We will know and recognize each other there. At least we will in time get to know each other individually.
    - a. 1John 3:2 - we will see Jesus and recognize Him as He is.
    - b. 1Thes. 4:13-17 - speaks of us being caught up together with Him. It also mentions those who have fallen asleep (the text indicates that some to whom Paul was writing knew them and longed to see them again).
    - c. Luke 16:23 - The rich man in torment recognized Abraham and Lazarus.
    - d. Matt. 8:11 - Speaks of being there with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob specifically identified.
    - e. 2Sam. 12:23 - David looked forward to going to his son after he died (indicating a belief that he was still alive and that he would recognize him).
    - f. Matt. 17:3 - the transfiguration; in some way the apostles were able to recognize Elijah and Moses.
    - g. Angels in heaven are distinct in being but different in role.
- B. One might ask: “How can I be happy in heaven knowing that my beloved ones are lost for all of eternity?”
  - 1. How much we will remember of the lost is not specifically addressed in the scriptures, but we know this: there will be no sadness or tears; God will wipe away all tears - Rev. 21:4
    - a. “God will wipe away all tears” - He will comfort and remove every cause for sorrow. How He will do that is not revealed in scripture.
    - b. In heaven, we will know that those who belong there are there, and we will better understand and accept it.
  - 2. We don’t need to have all of the explanations in this world. Not sure we can understand a Divine realm based only on earthly experiences. Just trust that we will understand better when we get there.
    - a. Will not knowing change your mind about going there?
- C. Keep reading and dreaming of being at home in heaven. It will keep you focused and give purpose and hope while living here in this world.
  - 1. 2Cor. 5:8-9; Phil. 1:21-24



### **Questions for Lesson Eleven**

1. Who will be in heaven? (Hint: "The saved" is an incomplete answer)
2. Will babies who passed in infancy be in heaven? Why?
3. What is the difference between saved and safe?
4. What will we be like in heaven?
5. Will our relationships in this world have any bearing in heaven?
6. What will we do in heaven?
7. Will we know one another in heaven? Prove your answer.
8. How can one be happy in heaven if his loved ones in this world do not go to heaven with him?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

### **Lesson Twelve: The Perfect Life in Heaven**

#### **I. PERFECT CONDITIONS IN HEAVEN** (What things will be in a complete, fulfilled state in Heaven?)

##### **A. We will have perfect knowledge.**

1. We will understand everything we now question. We won't be frustrated with straining to understand and believe. We'll be at peace with the truth. We will know as we are known.

##### **B. We will experience perfect glory.**

1. The word describes perfect beauty, excellence, and greatness. All of us appreciate beauty and excellence in our physical world because we are created in the image of God, who is not only the source of glory, but the ultimate example of glory as well.
2. Matt. 24:30, 25:31; Mark 8:38
3. Do you remember the moment when you first felt appreciation of the beauty of something you saw or read or heard? Imagine being in that state forever - Rev. 21:18-21

##### **C. We will enjoy perfect rest.**

1. Why do we love to sleep in on our days off? Is it because we are lazy? Or is it because we become weary of the labor of life?
2. Many of us understand what it is to love to work and be productive, but we also know that life's burdens can wear us out.
3. God has promised that Heaven will be a place of rest. Not a place that lacks purposeful occupation, but a place where the burdens and struggles of life are lifted. We won't have to strain to be good, struggle to maintain Godly relationships or behaviors.
4. We will have the difficulties of life removed. Heb. 4:9-11

##### **D. We will participate in perfect worship.**

1. Ever had to try really hard to focus in worship? In Heaven the mere presence of God will provoke a response of worship without any effort on our part - Isa. 6:3

##### **E. We will relish in perfect activity.**

1. We think of work as laborious and toilsome burdens we must do to make a living and survive. But at the same time, all of us engage in some activity that is actually work, but is not laborious.

There are some activities we are actually happy to perform. Even the Garden of Eden offered a pleasant, meaningful task to Adam.

2. Jesus often described Heaven in parables. In some of these parables, the saints present in heaven are clearly engaged in meaningful activity - Luke 19:17; Matt. 19:28

F. We will partake in perfect fellowship.

1. Most of us when given the chance would prefer to hang out with friends over just about any other activity. That's because we were created in the image of God who by His very nature is in a relationship with the two other Beings of the Godhead at all times. Our God is innately and characteristically relational.
2. That's why we are also driven toward relationships. Heaven is the place where this aspect of our nature will be fully realized.
3. Heb. 12:22-24

G. We will receive perfect recognition.

1. Heaven is a place where each of us will be recognized and rewarded by God. It is the place where everyone is satisfied with the acknowledgment, recognition, and reward they will receive from the king - Luke 19:15-19; Dan. 12:3; 1Cor. 3:14-15

## **II. ABSENT DESIRES IN HEAVEN** (What things will no longer be needed in Heaven?)

A. The need to have faith

1. Faith is the means by which we are saved. The fact that God is not visible to us requires us to have faith that He truly is and that He has spoken.
2. A day is coming when we will see Him directly. In that day, faith will no longer exist. We will know - Heb. 11:1-2, 6

B. The need to grow

1. We will already know all there is to know; there will be no need to grow. Consider the Bible principle of fullness; our desire to mature as children of God will be fully realized in Heaven.

C. The need for comfort

1. We won't find ourselves needing to lean on each other in Heaven. In fact, we won't find ourselves crying at all. We won't need comfort in difficult times because there won't be any difficult times - Rev. 21:3

D. The need to reach others

1. We won't be seeking the lost in Heaven. We won't be trying to figure out the best way to reach those who are unsaved.

2. There is only one opportunity to put faith in Christ, and that time will have expired in the Judgment - Heb. 9:27-28

Ever wonder why human beings are constantly seeking certain things they never seem to be able to achieve? How many of us love to learn, but realize that the more we know, the more we discover how much we don't know? How many of us yearn for beauty and excellence but have discovered how difficult it is to find perfection in our world? How many of us are tired and weary of the burdens we carry and desire a break from it all, but know that is just about impossible with life the way it is? How many find ourselves caught up in hobbies or other distractions that we obsess over in an effort to give our lives meaning? How many would love to be completely satisfied by our work, yet are frustrated and burned out? How many desire great relationships, but have come to discover that people will often let us down? And how many of us just want to be noticed for who we really are, but feel like the world doesn't even care that we exist?

Why is it that these 'natural' desires are part of our nature in the first place? If evolution is true, then the process of natural selection has played a rather cruel joke on all of us. It has allowed the human race to evolve with all of these drives that can never be satisfied. All these drives and desires that merely push us to frustration and despair if they can never be realized. But God is the author of our nature, and He tells us that we have been created in His Image; an image of perfect knowledge, glory, rest, worship, work, fellowship and recognition. No wonder we have these innate desires and drives, and thank God that we will someday be fully satisfied in them.

But there is something more that we learn from our study of Heaven. We have a better idea of what we are to do while here on earth. While we are here on earth, the needs God has built into us should be our priority. We need to take our eyes off the things we will be given in Heaven, our desire for, glory, rest, distraction, significance, approval and recognition, and do the things He assigned us here that we won't be able to do later. This is the time for us to trust in our faith, grow in our knowledge of God, comfort those in need, and reach those who are lost. We can't do that later. So let's simply be patient and look forward to what we can't have now and get at the business of what we can't do later. Let's live with a true understanding of Heaven that causes our lives here on earth to be radically different.

### **Questions for Lesson Twelve**

1. List five perfect conditions in heaven.
2. Why will faith and the Gospel be unnecessary in heaven?
3. Is the street of gold and gate of pearl literal? Why or why not?

## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

## **Lesson Thirteen: The Nature of Hell**

“We would do well to remember that we are dealing with terms in an attempt to describe a condition that almost defies description.” (Ray Summers, The Life Beyond)

### **I. WHERE WILL SINNERS DWELL?**

A. They will be separated from God in every absolute sense.

1. Matt. 7:21-23, 25:41-46; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:27, 22:15

B. The eternal dwelling place is called hell

1. The Greek word is "geenna" (gheh'-en-nah); it is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "Ge-Hinnom"

2. 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."

3. Jesus used the term to describe the final place of punishment

a. In His Sermon on the Mount - Matt. 5:21-22, 29-30

b. Sending disciples on the limited commission - Matt. 10:28

c. Warning against stumbling blocks - Matt. 18:8-9

d. Perhaps the most vivid use of this term is in Mark 9:43-48

4. Hell was originally prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41), but will also serve as the place of punishment for all the wicked as well

C. The eternal dwelling place is called the lake of fire

1. Where the beast and false prophet of Revelation will be sent - Rev. 19:20

2. Where the Satan himself will one day be cast - Rev. 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 - Rev. 20:14-15

4. The future residents of this place are listed in Rev. 21:8

## II. THE EXPERIENCES OF THE WICKED

- A. What such separation from God can be like, no one in this life can really know, for everyone in this life experiences a degree of God's presence - Acts 17:28
  - 1. Physical blessings are all manifestations of God's presence in our lives - Matt. 5:45
  - 2. The physical universe testifies to God's presence - Rom. 1:20
  - 3. Perhaps Jesus experienced a sense of being forsaken by God, when He suffered that temporary separation from God while bearing sins of the world on the cross - Matt. 27:46; Psalm 22:1
- B. The term commonly used to describe the experience of separation from God is eternal death.
  - 1. The wages of sin is death - Rom. 6:23
  - 2. In Rev. 2:11; 20:14 it is called the second death, so we know that the experience of the wicked is not simply physical death, or the first death.
  - 3. Since physical death is a separation of body and spirit, it is reasonable to conclude that the second death is separation of one's soul from God.
  - 4. Explanation:
    - a. God supplies the physical world; we orient and stabilize our lives to the laws and facts of the universe around us. Take away indicators of reality, completely isolate a mind from its sensory organs and madness will ensue.
    - b. God supplies the laws and structures of human interaction; abandon those laws for a short time and pain, suffering, and chaos will follow.
    - c. God gives purpose for existence; take it away and life becomes meaningless and empty, and despair and immobility sets in.
    - d. Whether men believe and accept it or not, it is a fact that they depend on God's presence for their own continued existence.
  - 5. Now remove all of those things: the physical world by which we orient ourselves, rules of peaceable interaction, and any reason to go on living, and what do you have left? Nothing.
    - a. Now add darkness, loneliness, terror, pain, and the knowledge that this condition will never end. What do you have? Hell.

- b. Now inform that lost soul that he will never again have the opportunity to ask for help from the only Being powerful enough to save him from the indescribable horror of his state, and what do you have? Eternal death.
- C. The eternal destiny is described as destruction.
  - 1. An everlasting destruction from the presence of God - 2Thes. 1:9
  - 2. Whose end is destruction - Phil 3:19
  - 3. The concept of destruction does not demand annihilation.
    - a. It can just as easily describe the condition of existing in a state of total ruin. Pompeii was destroyed by a volcano, but it exists to this day as a sad ruin of its former state.
    - b. The sad state of a life in ruins in hell; a life that once held so much promise and enjoyed so many opportunities to go to heaven and to avoid hell, but chose to let ruin overtake it.
- D. It is also described as everlasting punishment.
  - 1. The punishment for the wicked is as everlasting as the life given the righteous - Matt. 25:46
  - 2. The wicked will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord - 2Thes. 1:9
- E. It is spoken of as outer darkness - Matt. 25:30; 2Peter 2:17; Jude 13
- F. Other descriptions include weeping and gnashing of teeth.
  - 1. Matt. 25:30, 24:51, 22:13
  - 2. When such terms as these are used, it is difficult to accept any view that suggests the wicked will simply cease to exist at death, or be raised for judgment and then annihilated, aka Jehovah's Witnesses.
- G. It is fire.
  - 1. The fires of Gehenna
  - 2. The lake of fire and sulfur - Rev. 21:8
  - 3. Fire that is never quenched - Mark 9:43-48
  - 4. Fire of indignation that does not consume - Heb. 10:26-27

#### Conclusion:

- A. Since we are dealing with a non-physical realm, it is evident that some of these terms are not meant to literally describe the place, but to illustrate it
  - 1. These are terms anyone can recognize which describe something we cannot possibly comprehend with the finite mind

2. It is a place of punishment reserved for those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ - 2Thes. 1:8-9
3. It is natural to revolt against or outright reject the harshness of Bible teaching on hell.
  - a. "How could a loving God send anyone there?!"
  - b. What hubris! Judging God by your standard of love and fairness. But you cannot dismiss hell without mocking the terrible nature of sin, or the wisdom and justice of God.

### **Questions for Lesson Thirteen**

1. Describe how complete will be the separation between God in heaven and the eternally lost sinner in hell.
2. For whom was hell originally prepared?
3. Who will reside in hell? (Hint: "The lost" is an incomplete answer)
4. Does destruction mean annihilation? Why or why not?
5. Are the darkness, fire, sulfur, and worm literal? Why or why not?



## **The Life that is to Come**

***“...Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1Tim. 4:8).***

## **Lesson Fourteen: How Can a Loving God Send Anyone to Hell?**

A difficult and challenging subject for believer and unbeliever alike; for many, it is the reason they give to doubt God. Many have their own concept of how God must be; thus, hell and eternal punishment does not fit their view. Their preconception leads to doubting the goodness, and even the existence, of God.

### **I. UNDERSTANDING "HELL" AND "LOVING"**

A. Hell is described in different ways in Scripture.

1. Gehenna: the Valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem, place where garbage was burned; place where worm does not die, fire unquenched; demonstrates hell as unpleasant location.
  - a. Matt. 5:22, 29, 10:28; Mark 9:43-49
2. The Outer Darkness: demonstration of complete separation from God; place of weeping and gnashing of teeth, indicating great torture, misery - Matt. 8:12, 22:13
3. Hell is vengeance upon unbelievers and those disobedient to the Gospel who will suffering eternal destruction away from God and His glory and power - 2Thes. 1:8-9
4. Hell is the second death, a lake of fire and sulfur, a place of perpetual torment - Rev. 20:10, 14-15
5. It is also clear who will be sent there: those who do not believe in God, do not obey Gospel of Jesus Christ; those who have done evil; those involved in sin without repentance.
  - a. Rom. 2:5-10; Gal. 5:19-21; 2Thes. 1:6-9; Rev. 20:12-15
6. How could a loving God send anyone there?

B. What does the questioner mean by “loving”?

1. 1Cor. 13:6 - Love cannot rejoice with unrighteousness.
2. Heb. 12:5-11 - True love is demonstrated through discipline
3. Love seeks the best interests of the one loved.

C. If God loves everyone, how could hell be in the best interest of anyone?

### **II. CONSIDER THE QUESTION**

A. If we adjust the question slightly, the answer will be more evident.

- B. How can a loving God send Adolf Hitler to hell? Joseph Stalin, Saddam Hussein, and Osama bin Laden?
  - 1. After all, God loves them too, right? - John 3:16
- C. For most people, the idea of terribly sinful people being in hell does not pose much difficulty. Why is that?

### **III. A SENSE OF JUSTICE**

- A. The reason why people have little difficulty with the concept of Adolf Hitler being in hell is because everyone recognizes he sinned greatly.
  - 1. After all, he caused the death of tens of millions of people and the suffering of countless more.
  - 2. How could such a person be rewarded for that type of behavior? He deserves eternal punishment for what he has done.
- B. Justice: "The virtue which consists in giving to everyone what is his due." (Webster's)
  - 1. If wrongdoing goes unpunished, it both cheapens doing what is right and encourages further wrongdoing.
  - 2. Psalm 33:5; Isa. 61:8
- C. God can't allow unrepentant sin to go unpunished and yet love justice.
  - 1. Rom. 2:5-6, 11, 12:19
- D. A source of hope for the oppressed, downtrodden: God's righteous judgment against those who oppress - 2Thes. 1:6; Rev. 6:9-11

### **IV. HARMONIZING LOVE, JUSTICE, AND GRACE**

- A. Some believe that eternal punishment is too severe a penalty for temporal sin; in their minds; to them it is not really justice, because they appear to be getting more than their due.
  - 1. Others have difficulty with the idea that God would save some who sinned rather grievously yet repented, while those who sinned less terribly without repentance would be condemned; a repentant serial killer being saved while one of his or her victims might be hell bound.
  - 2. Many more certainly can understand why hell would be for "those really bad sinners," but cannot imagine themselves or their friends and associates who are "not that bad" going there.
- B. Sin is sin; distinctions are generated by human opinion.
  - 1. Gal. 5:19-22; 1Cor. 6:9-10 - Murder, adultery, stealing are on the same level as rivalries, sectarianism, outbursts of anger, lying.
  - 2. Showing partiality and not doing good is sin - James 2:9, 4:17
  - 3. Therefore, sin is transgression against any of God's purposes.

- a. James 2:9; 1John 3:4
- 4. All sin is as much a transgression of God's will as any other sin.
- 5. Any who sin fall under the same sentence of condemnation.
  - a. Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 3:9-23
- 6. Thus, it does not matter if we murdered, raped, or lied, or had an outburst of anger, or simply failed to show proper love to one another; in so doing, we transgress God's will, and without repentance, will reap the eternal consequences.
- C. God's Justice vs. God's Mercy
  - 1. We also must remember that according to God's sense of justice, we all deserve condemnation for our sins - Rom. 6:23
  - 2. Yet God has shown us grace and mercy by providing the payment for our sin through the blood of Jesus Christ.
    - a. Rom. 3:24, 5:6-9; Eph. 2:4-6; Titus 3:3-5
  - 3. The sacrifice satisfies God's justice, but only if we accept the terms of the sacrifice: obedience to God's purposes.
    - a. Rom. 6:17-22; 2Thes. 1:6-9; 1Peter 1:22
  - 4. Therefore, we must remember that the fact that anyone is redeemed from the sentence of hell is a sign of God's great grace and mercy toward us; we do not deserve it.
  - 5. The question is not how can a loving God send anyone to hell; it is none of us deserves to go to heaven, so what has a loving God done to help us avoid hell and go to heaven?
- D. God's ways are greater than ours.
  - 1. It is also essential for us to remember that we are the creation, God is the Creator - Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 9:19-21
  - 2. Thus, even if things may not seem right or just or fair to us, we must keep it in mind that God's perspective is greater than our own, and the creation is not going to have the understanding that the Creator has.
- E. If God is a God of justice, and He declares it just, who are we to say that it is unjust? - Ez. 18:29-32
  - 1. The question has radically changed: it is not why is a loving God sending sinners to hell; it is why are sinners choosing to go to hell. Is God going to oppose their choice to go there?
  - 2. Does anyone complain about the idea of receiving eternal blessings that are clearly over the top as a reward for earthly obedience?
    - a. Rom. 8:17-18 - Fellow heirs with Jesus. Has anything we have done measured up to what He has done?

- b. Rev. 21-22 - Have we worked enough and been righteous enough for such a place?
- F. There is no sin beyond the power of Divine forgiveness - 1Tim. 1:12-16
  - 1. All have received the chance to come to the knowledge of God and will be judged justly at the Judgment - Rom. 1:19-20
  - 2. While this may offend your sense of fairness, you need to understand that no one promised life would be fair as judged by an arbitrary human standard of fairness.
- G. There is no passage of Scripture that gives the idea that everyone will be saved, that good people will be saved by their own merit, or that there is some last-minute exemption clause for the majority of people.
  - 1. Jesus acknowledged that the majority will not be redeemed.
    - a. Matt. 7:13-14
  - 2. Let no one be deceived: hell is not just for terrible sinners; it is for every unrepentant sinner, believer or unbeliever.
    - a. Matt. 7:19-21; 1Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Heb. 10:26-31
  - 3. It is only thanks to His grace and mercy that any are saved!
  - 4. Some will be saved, but not by their own merit, but because they believed in God and obeyed Him.
  - 5. Despite human definitions and opinions, God considers all unrighteousness (and the lack of doing righteousness) to be sin, and all who continue in such paths without repentance will be hell bound.

### **Questions for Lesson Fourteen**

1. How can a loving God send anyone to hell?
2. What kinds of actions get one sent to hell?
3. Do God and human beings always define "loving" the same way? Why or why not?
4. What is justice? What is the role of justice in the Judgment of the lost?
5. Does God make distinctions between the levels of evil in different sins? Why do human beings do this?

6. What two Divine prerogatives does God have at His disposal that can trump the demands of justice and Judgment? What qualifications or rights do human beings have to exercise these Divine prerogatives?
7. Does anyone deserve to go to heaven? Has anyone ever earned the right to escape hell by means of a moral life?
8. Why do so many people who believe in heaven, refuse to believe in hell?
9. What will those consigned to hell do for all of eternity?
10. Will God or anyone in heaven notice?