

REVIEW

- Check out the Timeline at the Information Area of the lobby if you don't already have one.
- Remember you are made of both body and soul/spirit.
- We have personality, are free to choose, and are relational beings because we are made in God's image.
- We chose poorly which resulted in the curse: the body dies, but the soul lives on in one of two places.
- Before Christ versus after Christ—the veil was torn.

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATIONS:

- After you die, you face judgement called the “initial judgement.”
- After an initial judgement, you are sent to one of two places.
- These places are temporary/present realities with the ultimate, eternal reality to come after the “great white throne judgement” that Patrick spoke of last week.
 - These are temporary waiting places. They're like heaven and hell, but they're not. (See Luke 16:19-31)
- For believers, it's paradise with the Lord. (See Luke 23:43 where the world “paradise” has a Persian background and references the walled garden of a noblemen.)¹
 - This is different than Luke 16:19-31 because now those who die are with the Lord in paradise. The “great white throne judgement” is described in Matthew 25 and Revelation 20.
 - This is judgement but not condemnation. (See Romans 8:1)

Hebrews 9:27 (NIV) Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...

See also 2 Corinthians 5:1–11

INTRO TO THE SUBJECT OF HEAVEN—THE ULTIMATE, ETERNAL END:

- There are 653 occurrences of the word “Heaven” in the Bible!
- **The Bible speaks about four different “heavens.”**
 - Some are confused that there are seven heavens and that they refer to different levels in heaven where we get to go based on how good we are.
 - The concept of seven heavens actually comes from Islam.
- **When the Bible refers to the four Heavens, it is referring to one of these:**

A NEW ETERNITY: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

- Heaven for everyone
- Heaven with rewards—we will talk about this with Randy Alcorn during services May 23rd & 26th.

WE WILL HAVE A NEW BODY.

1 Corinthians 15:42

1 Corinthians 15:51–53 (NIV) ⁵¹Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵²in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

A NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH:

- To understand the new heaven and new earth, you have to understand the old one. From there, we get a framework to build off of.
- Pre-curse: God and man walked together. Man and woman were naked, and there was no shame (there was trust, relationship, and nothing to hide), no sinful nature, no war in the marriage, no weeds and toil, no sweat of the brow, no devil/serpent...

- It was very good. There was the tree of life, and no death.
- They were walking with an eternal, infinite God. They were always learning and growing. Relationships were perfect. There was no sin, no devil, no coveting. There was love for God and others.
- There was no boredom! Instead, there was adventure, excitement, deep relationship, and satisfaction.
- The New heaven and New Earth will reveal the old, renewed.

Isaiah 25:6-8 (NLT) ⁶In Jerusalem, the Lord of Heaven's Armies will spread a wonderful feast for all the people of the world. It will be a delicious banquet with clear, well-aged wine and choice meat. ⁷There he will remove the cloud of gloom, the shadow of death that hangs over the earth. ⁸He will swallow up death forever! The Sovereign Lord will wipe away all tears. He will remove forever all insults and mockery against his land and people. The Lord has spoken!

See also Revelation 21:1-8, Revelation 22:1-4, Revelation 7:9-12, and Matthew 13:41

LIVING WITH ETERNITY IN MIND:

- What you believe about death determines how you live.
- How foolish it is to live for something that does not last at the expense of something that will not end!
- Wise choices

"Satan need not convince us that Heaven doesn't exist. He need only convince us that Heaven is a place of boring, unearthly existence. If we believe that lie, we'll be robbed of our joy and anticipation, we'll set our minds on this life and not the next, and we won't be motivated to share our faith. Why should we share the "good news" that people can spend eternity in a boring, ghostly place that even we're not looking forward to?"

- Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*, p. 11

"I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others to do the same."

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, book 3 chapter 10

Matthew 16:24-27 (NIV) ²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

See also Matthew 6:19-20, Colossians 3:1-3, 1 Corinthians 2:4-10, and 1 Peter 2:11-12

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN LIFE GROUP OR WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

1. Share what was significant to you from the sermon.
2. Take a look at 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:8. A) How often do you consider heaven? B) What have you imagined or thought about heaven? How is this series impacting what your perspective?
3. Read Luke 23:24 and Revelation 21:1-2. These passages show Present Heaven and New Heaven. A) What questions do you have about Present Heaven? What questions do you have about New Heaven? Send some of them in to: askreallife@reallifeministries.com
4. Look at 1 Peter 2:11-12 and Colossians 3:1-4. A) What helps you focus on what is to come? B) What can distract you from focusing on earth as temporary and being with the Lord as permanent – the real reality?
5. Read Matthew 6:21 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19. A) What would change in your life if you consistently considered heaven as your home and this earth as a temporary place? Think of ways to help you focus on more regularly on heaven.

A great resource is *Touchpoints: Heaven* by Randy Alcorn.

Next week: One Minute After You Die (Week 4): Hell

Passages to prepare: Luke 16:19-31 and Revelations 20:11-14

¹For the Greek and Hebrew words used in the Bible and their etymology, check out the resources at Biblehub.com!

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