

# Why We Believe Every Man's Destiny Will Either Be In Heaven Or Hell: Which Will You Choose?

Summer Seminar #8 – Wed. August 5, 2015

- **Review Lessons 1-7:**
  - Why we believe God is our Creator
  - Why we believe the Bible is God's Word
  - Why we believe in Absolute Truth
  - Why we believe man needs a Savior and He is Jesus
  - Why we believe Jesus is the Messiah
  - Why we believe Jesus rose from the dead
  - There's Hope! The Word of Life makes change possible

**“If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.” C.S. Lewis**

- **Heaven & Hell = more than adjectives or attitudes... They are REAL PLACES!**
  - A declining interest in both heaven & hell by a lot of people
  - Heb 11:10 – we should see ourselves as aliens and strangers here on earth but way too many think this is our final destination
  - Some think heaven would be an unwelcome intrusion into their busy schedule or the life they enjoy now
  - Heb. 13:14; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1 – we should be longing for heaven
- **Belief in Heaven & Hell**
- **Why do people believe in an After Life?**
  - Eccl. 3:11 – “He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart...”
  - We know there is an immaterial (soul/spirit) in us that goes on after death
  - The Bible tells us it is true (Mark 12:26-27 – “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living...”)
- **Books / Movies / TV Shows / Music:**
  - **Movies:** “Sixth Sense,” “Afterlife,” “Ghost”
  - Near Death Experiences (NDE)
  - Out Of Body Experiences (OOBE)
  - Book / New Movie opening in September: “**Ninety Minutes in Heaven**” by **Don Piper**
  - **Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross** 1970 book, “On Death and Dying” – tales of people who supposedly came back from the dead (she became a leading guru in the New Age movement)
  - **Raymond A. Moody** 1975 book, “Life After Life” (he later got involved in the Occult)
  - **Betty J. Eadie**, “Embraced by the Light.” (claims she saw Jesus... she is a Mormon)
  - **Richard Eby**, “Caught Up into Paradise” (he toured both heaven and hell)
    - Most of these accounts have nothing to do with the way it is described in the Bible when people see a vision of heaven or the heavenly Jesus
      - Is. 6:1ff – fell on his face
      - Ezek. 1:28 – fell on his face
      - Rev. 19:10 – John even fell down at the feet of an angel in heaven!
- **2 Cor. 11:13-15** – Satan is a deceiver! Disguises himself as an angel of light

## **I. What the Bible says about Heaven (see John MacArthur book, “The Glory of Heaven”):**

### **A. Three different places:**

- Atmospheric heaven (Gen. 7:11-12)
- Planetary heaven (Gen. 1:14-17)
- Heaven where God dwells (1 Kings 8:27; Ps. 139:8; Is. 57:15; 63:15; Ps. 33:13-14; Mt. 5:16; 10:32-33; 12:50; 16:17; 18:10, 14, 19)

### **B. New Heavens and Earth and New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2ff)**

- 1500 mile cube (or pyramid)
- No temple (21:22); no light source (21:23); no security system (21:25); no needs (22:1-2); no curse (22:3-5)

### **C. Preciousness of Heaven**

- The Father and Son are there (Mt. 6:9; Heb. 9:24)
- Many brothers and sisters are there (Heb. 12:23)
- Our names are recorded there (Lk. 10:20)
- Our inheritance is there (1 Pet. 1:4)
- Our citizenship is there (Phil. 3:20)
- Our eternal reward is there (Mt. 5:12; 6:19-21)
- We can persevere here thinking about going there (2 Cor. 4:18-5:1; Rom. 8:18)
- We will have new bodies there (Phil. 3:21)

### **D. Blessings:**

- Forever in the presence of God
- Unbroken fellowship with Christ (John 17:24)
- Joint-heirs
- Rule and reign
- Riches of heaven to be enjoyed.

### **E. We will:**

- Be glorified (resurrection bodies);
- Perfectly righteous
- Be like Jesus (1 Jn. 3:3)
- Be free from evil forever
- Enjoy endless, perfect pleasure (Ps. 16:11)
- Have perfect knowledge (1 Cor 13:12)
- Know perfect comfort (Lk. 16:25)
- **Experience Perfect love (1 Cor. 13:13)**
- Have perfect joy (Mt. 25:23).
- **Know each other (Mt. 8:11; 17:3)**
- Be with departed believers we miss now (1 Thess. 4:13-18)
- Have intimate fellowship with God (Rev. 21:3; 22:3-4)
- Worship God with the angels (Rev. 4-5)

## **II. Attempts to do away with Hell:**

### **A. Redefine it!**

### **B. Universalism** = ultimately everyone will make it to heaven

- **But** the Bible speaks of sheep & goats (Mt. 25) as well as a separation at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20:11ff).

**C. Annihilation** = The teaching that after death unbelievers suffer the penalty of God's wrath for a time, and then are "annihilated," or destroyed, so that they no longer exist. Some forms of this teaching hold that annihilation occurs immediately upon death. (41C.2)<sup>1</sup>

- **Claims of Biblical support:** (1) the biblical references to the *destruction* of the wicked, which, some say, implies that they will no longer exist after they are destroyed (Phil. 3:19; 1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2 Peter 3:7; et al.); (2) the apparent inconsistency of eternal conscious punishment with the *love of God*; (3) the apparent injustice involved in the *disproportion* between sins committed in time and punishment that is eternal; and (4) the fact that the *continuing presence of evil creatures in God's universe* will eternally mar the perfection of a universe that God created to reflect his glory.
- **Responses:** (1) Destruction does not necessarily imply the cessation of existence but simply describes the harmful effects of final judgment on unbelievers; (2) If God's love is okay with divine punishment of the wicked for any length of time then there is no reason why it is inconsistent just because the judgment is longer; (3) It is not unfair to judge a temporal sin with eternal punishment. David Kingdon observes that "sin against the Creator is heinous to a degree utterly beyond our sin-warped imaginations' [ability] to conceive of ... Who would have the temerity to suggest to God what the punishment ... should be?"<sup>14</sup> He also responds to this objection by suggesting that unbelievers in hell may go on sinning and receiving punishment for their sin, but never repenting, and notes that Revelation 22:11 points in this direction: "Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy."<sup>15</sup> God's justice would not be satisfied by a short punishment prior to annihilation. If it was satisfied the unbeliever should be allowed to go to heaven and not be annihilated. (4) When God punished evil and triumphs over it, the glory of His justice, righteousness, and power to triumph over all opposition will be seen (Rom. 9:17, 22-24). The depth of the riches of God's mercy will also then be revealed, for all redeemed sinners will recognize that they too deserve such punishment from God and have avoided it only by God's grace through Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 9:23-24).

**D. Purgatory** = In Roman Catholic doctrine, the place where the souls of believers go to be further purified from sin until they are ready to be admitted into heaven.<sup>2</sup>

- Devised to accommodate the denial of justification by faith alone in the finished work of Christ alone.
  - They believe justification is an on-going process that depends on the degree of real, personal righteousness we achieve.
  - They believe that Christ's merit imputed to us is not enough to save; we must earn merit of our own through the sacraments and other good works we do.
  - Our justification is not complete until we are perfect.
  - Purgatory is where we are purged of sin and gain whatever merit is lacking to enter heaven. This will involve intense pain and suffering.
  - Righteousness from people on earth can be imputed to the departed dead in Purgatory (via lighting candles, praying prayers, Masses said for the dead, etc.).
- **But:** Heb. 9:27; Lk. 16; Lk. 23:42-43 (Today in Paradise)

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<sup>1</sup> Grudem, W. A. (2004). *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine* (p. 1235). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

<sup>14</sup> David Kingdon, "Annihilationism: Gain or Loss?" (March, 1992; unpublished paper obtained from the author), p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Grudem, W. A. (2004). *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine* (p. 1252). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

### III. What the Bible says about Hell:

#### A. Why Hell? [See Lesson #4: Why we believe man needs a Savior and He is Jesus]

- **Heaven's Limited Membership** (Rev. 21:27; 22:14-15)
- **Man's condition**
  - **Totally depraved** – Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-23
  - **Unrepentant** – Rev. 6:15-17; 9:20-21
- **God's nature:**
  - **Holiness** – Habakkuk 1:13
  - **Infinite & Eternal** – one act of defiance against an infinite, eternal God is deserving of an eternal punishment
  - **Justice** – Jonathan Edwards wrote, **“The glory of God is the greatest good; it is that which is the chief end of creation; it is of greater importance than anything else. But this is one way wherein God will glorify Himself, as in the eternal destruction of ungodly men He will glorify His justice. Therein He will appear as a just governor of the world. The vindictive justice of God will appear strict, exact, awful, and terrible, and therefore glorious.”** (Rom. 12:19)
  - Theologian Louis Berkhof wisely points out that the final judgment is not for the purpose of letting God find out the condition of our hearts or the pattern of conduct of our lives, for He already knows that in every detail. Berkhof says of the final judgment: **It will serve the purpose rather of displaying before all rational creatures the declarative glory of God in a formal, forensic act, which magnifies on the one hand His holiness and righteousness, and on the other hand, His grace and mercy. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the judgment at the last day will differ from that of the death of each individual in more than one respect. It will not be secret, but public; it will not pertain to the soul only, but also to the body; it will not have reference to a single individual, but to all men.**<sup>6</sup>
- **Final Judgment according to Scripture** (Rev. 20:11-15; Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 2:5; see also Matt. 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:36; 25:31–46; 1 Cor. 4:5; Heb. 6:2; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6)

#### B. Jesus will be the Judge (2 Tim. 4:1; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Mt. 25:31-33; Jn. 5:26-27)

- a. He judges impartially (1 Pet. 1:17; Rom. 2:11; Col. 3:25)
- b. Every mouth will be stopped and the whole world will be held accountable to God (Rom. 3:19)
- c. God will be praised for His judgments (Rev. 19:1-2)

#### C. Moral application of the Final Judgment:

- a. Satisfies our need for justice in the world (Col. 3:25; Rev. 20:12; Mal. 3:16)
- b. Enables us to forgive others freely (Rom. 12:19; 1 Pet. 2:22-23; Lk. 23:34; Acts 7:60)
- c. Provides a motive for righteous living (Mt. 6:20 – treasures in heaven)
- d. Provides a great motive for evangelism (Ezek. 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9)

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<sup>6</sup> Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* p. 731.

## D. Biblical Overview (Summary of a sermon from Mark 9:42-50 on Feb. 1, 2015):

### 1. Terms Associated With Hell

- a. **Sheol** - In the OT can mean the place of departed spirits or the grave - Ps. 16:10
- b. **Hades** - In the NT usually means the place of departed spirits - Acts 2:27; Lk. 17
- c. **Gehenna** - Valley of Hinnom - place where trash was burned continuously - Mk. 9:43-48 cf. Is. 66:24; Josh. 15:8; Jer. 19:6
- d. **Tartarus** - The deepest abyss of Hades prepared for the devil and his angels - 2 Pet. 2:4

### 2. Descriptions of Hell

- a. Matthew 25:41 - **Eternal fire**
- b. Matthew 25:46 - **Eternal punishment**
- c. II Thessalonians 1:9 - **Eternal destruction**
- d. Revelation 19:20 - **Lake of fire**

**There is good evidence from the Scriptures that God Himself will be the fire in hell. Hebrews 12:29 says, “Our God is a consuming fire.”** The ungodly on earth ignorantly dance for joy when they hear pastors speak about the love and mercy of God, but they will be the beneficiaries of neither, unless they repent. To them God will be an all consuming fire. **Hebrews 10:30-31** warns: “For we know him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” It is a fearful thing, it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God! You shall not escape hell, sinner. God will be your hell and His wrath will consume you and be poured upon you as long as He exists. “Who understands the power of Thine anger?” (**Psalm 90:11**). **It is because God Himself will be the fire in hell that words cannot possibly express the terrors of the damned in hell. “There is no reason to suspect that possibly ministers set forth this matter beyond what it really is, that possibly it is not so dreadful and terrible as it is pretended, and that ministers strain the description of it beyond just bounds...We have rather reason to suppose that after we have said our utmost, all that we have said or thought is but a faint shadow of reality.”**

- e. Matthew 8:12 - **Outer Darkness**
- f. Revelation 20:1-3 - **Bottomless Pit** (KJV) [“abyss” NASB]

### 3. Purposes for Hell

- a. Matthew 25:41 - **The devil and his angels**
- b. Revelation 21:8 - **The wicked**
- c. II Peter 2:4 - **Fallen angels**
- d. Revelation 19:20 - **The beast and the false prophet**
- e. Revelation 14:9-11 - **Worshippers of the beast**
- f. Matthew 13:41-42 - **Those who reject the Gospel**

A.W. Tozer = “**It is my opinion that tens of thousands of people, if not millions, have been brought into some kind of religious experience by accepting Christ, and they have not been saved.**”

### 4. Punishment Experienced in Hell

- a. Matthew 23:14 - **Degrees** (cf. Luke 12:45-48)

b. Revelation 14:11 - Unceasing

**“In hell there is no hope. They have not even the hope of dying--the hope of being annihilated. They are forever--forever--forever lost! On every chain in hell, there is written “forever”. In the fires there, blaze out the words, “forever.” Above their heads, they read, “forever.” Their eyes are galled and their hearts are pained with the thought that it is “forever.” Oh, if I could tell you tonight that hell would one day be burned out, and that those who were lost might be saved, there would be a jubilee in hell at the very thought of it. But it cannot be--it is “forever” they are cast into the outer darkness.”** (Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The New Park Street Pulpit*, Volume 1, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 308)

c. Matthew 5:29-30 - Physical / Bodily (cf. Lk. 16:24)

**“We do not make enough of this. We all have experienced pain to some degree. We know it can make a mockery of all life’s goals and beauties. Yet we do not seem to know pain as a hint of hell, a searing foretaste of what will befall those who do not know Christ, a grim reminder of what we will be spared from.”**

John Thomas, “That Hideous Doctrine,” *Moody Monthly*, Sept. 1985

d. Matthew 10:28 - Soul

e. Luke 13:28 - Emotional / Mental

- **Weeping** = not something we get a grip on but something that gets a grip on us. Beyond crying, this is wailing! Horrifying sounds of those who are hurt beyond repair and seeking an escape. When someone is weeping what do you want to do? Compassionately care for them and help them. In hell **NOBODY WILL DO THIS!**
- **Gnashing of teeth** = Anguish over a wrong decision that has eternal consequences. Conscious awareness that others are where you want to be! (Lk. 16:25 = “Child REMEMBER”). Recognize Jesus as Messiah, Savior & Lord (Phil. 2:9-11) but it’s too late. Everyone in hell believes in Jesus! Cry out for help! Silence! Darkness! Conscious awareness that this is forever!

Heb. 10:26-31 – For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a **terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.** 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses. 29 How much **severer punishment** do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, **“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.”** And again, **“The Lord will judge His people.”** 31 **It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

**IV. What about babies / infants who die?** (From a two-part sermon series by John MacArthur: “The Salvation of Babies Who Die”)

**They go to Heaven! Job 3:11-17; Eccl. 6:3-5**

**Who qualifies as an infant or a child?** Those who have not reached sufficient, mature understanding in order to comprehend convincingly the issues of law and grace, sin and salvation. Certainly an infant in the womb, an infant at birth, a small child, and a mentally impaired adult at any age! Anyone in the condition who cannot sufficiently understand and comprehend so as to be fully convinced of the issues of law and grace and sin and salvation.

**Are all children conceived as sinners? Yes** (Ps. 51:5; Prov. 20:9; Jer. 17:9; Mt. 15:18; Rom. 3; 5:12; Eph. 2:3; Gen. 8:21; Is. 48:8). So we cannot answer the question by saying, “All babies die and go to heaven because they’re sinless.” They’re not. The very fact that they die proves that they have inherited the corruption of sin that produces death.

All babies are depraved, fallen, guilty, corrupt sinners, but sending them all to hell doesn’t necessarily protect the doctrine of salvation since the glory of the doctrine of salvation is that it is a sovereign choice by God provided for unworthy, incapable sinners purely on the basis of grace. That eliminates any work, including baptism.

**If infants are saved when they die, by what means are they saved?** If those who are retarded, mentally disabled, dysfunctional and therefore in the same category as an infant would be, in the condition of not having a capability to understand matters of salvation; if they are saved when they die, by what means are they saved? **By the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ, because that is the only means that anybody can be saved.**

**“The destiny of infants who die is determined irrespective of their choice by an unconditional decree of God suspended for its execution on no act of their own and their salvation is wrought by an unconditional application of the grace of Christ to their souls through the immediate and irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit prior to and apart from any action of their own proper wills. If death and infancy does depend on God’s providence, it is assuredly God in his providence who selects this vast multitude to be made participants of his unconditional salvation. This is but to say that they are unconditionally predestined to salvation from the foundation of the world.”** (B. B. Warfield)

- **Rev. 20:11-12** - Scripture always, always connects eternal condemnation to the sinner’s deeds – works - always.
- **John 8:21, 24** – greatest sin is unbelief
- **Deut. 1:39; Is. 7:16** – infants don’t know good or evil
- **Jer. 19:4** – blood of the “innocent”
- **Ezek. 16:15-21** – slaughtered “My children”
- **2 Sam. 12:12-23** – baby died and David was okay (cf. 2 Sam. 18 – Absalom died and David was heartbroken)

**“Salvation then is by grace completely apart from works. Damnation is by works completely apart from grace. Infants have no sinful works to fill the books and condemn them. So I say this, if a baby dies, that baby is elect. Instant heaven.”**

Written in 1907 by R. A. Webb. “If a dead infant were sent to hell on no other account than that of original sin, there would be a good reason to the divine mind for the judgment because sin is a reality, but the child’s mind would be a perfect blank as to the reason of its suffering. Under such circumstances, it would know suffering, but it would have no understanding of the reason for its suffering. It could not tell itself why it was so awfully smitten and, consequently, the whole meaning and significance of its sufferings, being to it a conscious enigma, the very essence of the penalty would be absent, and justice would be disappointed, cheated of its validation.”

- Compare Rom. 1 – NO EXCUSE for others!

**“So here’s a final summary: all children who die before they reach the condition of accountability, by which they convincingly understand their sin and corruption and embrace the gospel by faith, are graciously saved eternally by God through the work of Jesus Christ, being elect by sovereign choice, innocent of willful sin, rebellion, and unbelief, by which works they would be justly condemned to eternal punishment. So, when an infant dies, he or she is elect to eternal salvation and eternal glory.”**

## V. Response to Hell

A. **Proverbs 15:24 - Avoid it!** – “The path of life *leads* upward for the wise, that he may keep away from Sheol below.”

- Be wise!
- Repent of sin and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior now!
- Be born again into God’s eternal family!

B. **2 Peter 3:10-18 - Be holy!** – “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”



**“We can actually learn, by comparison, to hate sin as God hates it. As the reality of hell violates and offends us, for example, so sin violates and offends God. As we cannot bear to look upon the horrors of hell, so God cannot bear to look upon the horrors of sin. As hell revolts us to the point of hatred for it, so also God finds sin revolting.”**

John Thomas, “That Hideous Doctrine,” Moody Monthly, Sept. 1985

- **Stop playing with sin. Stop making excuses for sin. Hate sin! Repent of sin!**

C. **Jude 22-23 - Keep others from Hell!** - “And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”

The reality of hell should motivate us to witness of the grace of God through Jesus Christ! Can we ever hear a cry, see a tear, or feel pain and not be reminded of hell? Can we see unbelievers, know what their eternal future will be without Christ and not go warn them of sin, righteousness and judgment to come? Can we see that people are destined for that horrifying existence and not be moved with compassion?

**“Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that... The saving of souls, if a man has once gained love to perishing sinners and his blessed Master, will be an all-absorbing passion to him. It will so carry him away, that he will almost forget himself in the saving of others. He will be like the brave fireman, who cares not for the scorch or the heat, so that he may rescue the poor creature on whom true humanity has set its heart. If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for.”** (Charles Haddon Spurgeon)

D. Luke 17 – **Gratitude!** (1 leper out of 10)

- Jesus experienced all of God’s wrath so we would not have to! We have been delivered from God’s wrath!

Rom. 5:8 - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom. 5:10 - For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Rom. 8:1 - Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 Cor. 5:21 - He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**Rev. 21 = IF WE KNOW JESUS AS SAVIOR AND LORD WE GET TO GO TO HEAVEN!**