

Jesus, the Way to Heaven

LESSON SEVEN - By Sewell Hall

Both the Bible and experience remind us that death is certain.

"...It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." (**Hebrews 9:27**)

The judgment will take place when Jesus returns and as He has described it:

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. And all the nations will be gathered before Him, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left." (**Matt. 25:31-33**)

These two groups will go forth to vastly different destinations.

HELL

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, `Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" (Matthew 25:41)

"...It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire -- `where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'" (Mark 9:47-48)

"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (**Revelation 21:8**)

"Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." (**Ephesians 5:6**)

The warning of this last verse is appropriate for our times. Hell is a joke, considered no more than a mild by-word, in our generation. Even among those who claim to be Christians, there are many who insist that God is "too good" to send men to hell. To question hell, however, is to question the goodness of God, for God is also too good to lie. Jesus said:

"...These will go away into everlasting punishment." (**Matthew 25:46**)

One who believes in Jesus must believe that this is true. The way to hell is easy and popular.

"...Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it." (Matthew 7:13)

One does not have to do wicked things to go to hell. He may go to hell by failing to take the way to heaven. The Bible describes the end of the world when -

"...The Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)

Heaven

Man was not created to spend eternity in hell, but to walk with God in paradise (**Genesis 2:7-9**). When man lost his home in Eden through sin, God set in motion a plan of redemption by which he may be forgiven and enjoy a home that is even better than Eden.

John the apostle was given a vision of this new paradise:

"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, `Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.'" (Revelation 21:2-4)

This is the paradise to which the King will summon those on His right hand, saying,

"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34)

But the sad fact is that few will enter this heavenly paradise.

"Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:14)

Jesus Is the Way

Those who will enter the heavenly rest after judgment are those who die in Jesus, for **He is THE WAY.**

"Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes', says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'" (**Revelation 14:13**)

If we wish to be among those who die in the Lord, we must establish that relationship with Him while we live. This is not accomplished by merely calling Him "Lord", but by obeying God's will as revealed through Him. He has warned us:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (**Matthew 7:21**)

We have already learned that the will of the Father for those who believe in Jesus is that they should repent of their sins and be baptized into Christ.

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (**Galatians 3:27**)

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (**Acts 22:16**)

Baptism is only the beginning. God requires a life of faithfulness to Him.

"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved." (**Matt. 10:22**)

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

Having been baptized into Christ and living as He directs, we can be sure that are in the way to heaven. If we are not in Christ, we are not in the way for, as the text of this series assures us, He is the only way.

Questions

Using the quotations in this lesson or using your own Bible, please answer the following questions:

1. After death, one must face_____. (**Hebrews 9:27**)
2. Everlasting fire was prepared for the _____. (**Matthew 25:41**)
3. Those who do not_____God and do not_____the gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction. (**2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**)
4. _____will go through the wide gate to destruction, but _____ will find the way that leads to life. (**Matthew 7:13-14**)

5. In the New Jerusalem, God dwells with _____ and they shall be His _____ . (**Revelation 21:3**)
6. Those who will rest from their labors are those who die in the _____ . (**Revelation 14:13**)
7. The one who enters the kingdom of heaven is the one who _____ the will of the Father in heaven. (**Matthew 7:21**)
8. Those who put on Christ are those who are _____ into Christ. (**Gal. 3:27**)
9. Jesus said, "I am the _____, the truth, and the life." (**John 14:6**)

The following Scripture references are not in the lesson. Please find them in your own Bible and answer the questions.

10. (**James 4:14**) Our life is like a _____ that appears for a little while and then vanishes.
11. (**1 Corinthians 15:52**) The dead will be raised when the _____ sounds.
12. (**John 5:28-29**) Those who have done good will be raised unto _____, but those who have done evil will be raised to _____.
13. (**John 3:16**) God gave His only begotten Son that whosoever _____ in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
14. (**2 Peter 3:9**) God does not desire that any should perish but that all should _____.

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