

“Eternity and Heaven”
Class 21
(Basic Christianity)

Introduction and Overview: In this class we will investigate the teaching of the Christian faith regarding death, eternity, and the human experience in eternity. Particular attention will be given to heaven and the Christian’s place in heaven after death.

The State of Eternity

- Transcendent or Ultimate Reality – There is a reality above material physical reality. This reality is God Himself.
- Humans made in God’s Image – God makes humans with the image of God embedded in our humanity. This makes us spiritual in nature, and it gives us an eternal dimension.
- Eternity and Timelessness – Time is related to creation and the material reality; there is no time outside of creation.
- Eternity and Permanence – Eternity has a permanent quality to it. There is no ultimate modification once one enters into eternity.

Death

- Death in the Scriptures
 - Spiritual Death – The essential aspect of death for death to be death is the absence of life. This by necessity means that death is the experience of being separated from God’s life. This is why sin is the reason for the existence of death. God warned Adam and Eve that in the day they would disobey Him, they would surely die (Genesis 2:17; 3:3).
 - Physical Death – Physical death is the natural and necessary consequence of being separated from life. Spiritual death inserts in the physical experience the death principle so that there is aging, decay, diminished health, and ultimate physical death (2 Corinthians 4:16).
 - Second Death/Eternal – When a spiritually dead person dies physically, he or she enters into eternity to experience an eternal state of second death. This is the eternal state of being separated from the life of God (Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8)
- Christians die because this is part of the deliverance from the old order; in the resurrection Christians will be given new bodies in which to dwell for eternity. Death is defeated in Christ because of His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:26, 45-57).
- For the Christian, death is deliverance from the fallen sinful world, and it is the means by which the Christian goes immediately to be with Christ in heaven (Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8). The union with Christ that Christians possess is complete through death (Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 3:10).
- The Christian approaches death with peace, assurance, and even joy (Philippians 1:21-23; 2 Timothy 4:8; Psalm 116:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:10).

The Intermediate State - Sheol (Hebrew), Hades (Greek) – place of the dead (wicked and the righteous)

- Post-death for the unsaved
 - Immediate sealing of the eternal destiny of the unsaved
 - Luke 12:20-21 The Rich Fool
 - Luke 16:22-31 The Rich Man and Lazarus
 - The unsaved exist beyond death
 - They exist in Hades
 - They experience torment
 - They experience regret
 - They experience concern for loved ones
 - Gehenna (Greek) – hell (Matthew 5:29; 23:33)
 - Fire – unrelenting torment (Luke 16:24; Mark 9:45-46)
 - Lake of Fire – Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14-15
 - Hell is...
 - A place
 - With a people
 - Forever in torment
 - The Bible teaches this doctrine of hell.
 - The Bible teaches that there is no end to hell and its torments.
 - Logical Consideration of the False Teaching of Annihilation
 - The Bible does not textually allow for this teaching.
 - The suffering of Christ, the necessity of the cross, and the supreme value of the atoning merits of Christ on the cross all speak against annihilation.
 - The unsaved will be resurrected to hell at the final judgment (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Revelation 20:11-15)
 - The Judge
 - The Judged
 - The Judgment
- Post-death for the Christian
 - Paradise, Abraham's Bosom, and Heaven (synonyms)
 - Paradise – Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:3-4; Revelation 2:7
 - Abraham's Bosom – Luke 16:22
 - Christ enters death with the Christian, and the Christian goes through death to Christ:
 - The Christian with Christ (John 14:3; Luke 23:43)
 - The Christian in Christ's glory (Romans 8:17)
 - The Christian and heavenly experience (third heaven): Philippians 1:23; 3:20-21; 2 Corinthians 5:8; John 14:1-3
 - Knowledge
 - Emotion
 - Worship

- Relationship
- Joy
- Holiness
- Fulfillment
- Compensation
- Resurrected bodies (like Christ's heavenly body: Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2-3)
- The Christian in Heaven
 - The Christian immediately going to heaven through death
 - The Christian and Christ in heaven
 - The Christian and comfort in heaven
 - The Christian and love in heaven
 - The Christian and worship in heaven
 - The Christian and truth in heaven
 - The Christian and holiness in heaven
 - The Christian and joy in heaven
 - The Christian and fellowship in heaven
- The expressions, "The New Jerusalem" and "New Heavens and New Earth", are biblical expressions that indicate a renewed and reconstituted creation for all eternity.
- The Bible does not teach purgatory
 - There is no biblical support indicating that a person in eternity has a chance to go to heaven.
 - There is no biblical support that merit can be applied on behalf of a person after they die.
- The Bible does not teach soul-sleep
 - The biblical use of the term "sleep" for the dead indicates the appearance of the body, and perhaps the restfulness of the experience of the departed person in heaven. Jesus used the term, "sleep", before "waking" (healing) a little girl (Matthew 9:24; Luke 8:52). Jesus also used this expression in referring to Lazarus' death (John 11:11). He said this simply because the death was temporary, and He would heal and raise them up as if from sleep. Death for the Christian is temporary.