

Heaven For The Righteous - Hell For The Wicked

by Reuel Lemmons

An eternal God has provided an eternal reward for the eternal soul of man. Death isn't the end of it all. Scarce have the clods closed over us until we will be ushered into an eternal day. There will be a resurrection of all the dead, both good and bad. Oblivion isn't the eternal destiny after graduation from the school of life.

Paul, in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, explains in detail the nature of the resurrection. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive," is his conclusion. When the resurrection takes place, the righteous, trailing clouds of glory shall fly to the outstretched arms of him who went to Calvary that they might go to heaven. The wicked, unable to sleep, will have to arise to meet a God they have spurned and a Jesus they have turned down.

The Bible is specific and plain on the subject of Judgment. There will be a judgment. None will be able to sleep through it and none will be absent. All of us will meet God in Judgment. Many passages of Scripture refer to the fact that the dead, both small and great: both rich and poor; both good and bad will face God in judgment. We may stay out of church if we want to. We can live as mean as the Devil as long as we live if we wish. But there is one rendezvous we are all going to keep: we will meet God in Judgment (John 5:28-29).

In Matthew 25, Jesus gives us some specific information about what will take place when the Judgment day dawns. He says, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left" (25:31-33). We have the same picture in the wording of that powerful hymn:

"There's a great day coming,
A great day coming,
A great day coming, by and by -
When the saints and the sinners
shall be parted right and left -
Are you ready for that day to come?"

That question ought to be seriously considered by all who read these lines. The same Bible that tells us about heaven also tells us about Hell. There is no way to take one out of the Bible and leave the other in.

And there is no third option. All who miss heaven will end up in Hell. There is no other place to go. The judgment of God is final, and there is no higher court to which we can appeal an unfavorable verdict.

It is very final - this judgment. There is no second chance. There is no purgatory that we can be prayed out of. There is no possibility that someone else can be baptized for us after we are dead and effect our escape from the pit. Whatever reward we receive in the judgment, we will always have. It is eternal in duration. This is all the more reason why we ought to make our calling and election sure while we have the chance to do so (2 Peter 1:10-11).

The entire book of Revelation is given over to picturing for us, from many viewpoints, the cardinal fact that the lost will be punished while the redeemed will be richly rewarded in glory. Hell is designated as the abode of the lost forever, and Heaven is named as the home of the righteous forever.

We do not like to think about Hell. None of us would want to go there. If we had a chance to test the reality of Hell for five minutes we would all, if we had the opportunity, want to obey the gospel. Hell is described often in the Scriptures - always as a horrible place where worms don't die, and the fire is never quenched (Mark 9:48). Jesus put it this way in Matthew twenty-five; "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." (verse 41).

It would be an awful thing to be shut out from the presence of God forever. Here in this life we would surely not want to be banished to a place where God never shows his power or providence. It would be much worse to spend an eternity in a place where light never comes, and grace and love and mercy are unknown.

If we were born totally depraved, and incapable of being saved, we might well blame God; but we were not. We are free moral agents - capable of choosing to be lost or saved. If any of us are lost it will be because we chose to be lost. God has done all He can do. Jesus has done all he can do. The ball is in our court and the next move is ours. If we are lost it will be our fault and none other's.

How much more desirable it is to be saved eternally, and to live in heaven following judgment. We can, you know.

Limited as we are to the vehicle of human speech, it is completely impossible to adequately describe the glories and the joys of that celestial world. Eye has not seen; ear has not heard; nor has it entered into any man's heart what God has prepared for the re-deemed (1 Cor. 2:9). About all we can say is that God will wipe away all tears from our eyes forever. There will be no more sorrow nor sickness, and the angel says, there shall not be any more death; for these former things shall have passed away (Rev. 21: 4).

All the tongues of all the orators and the pens of all the poets cannot do justice to a description of heaven. Only God can prepare such a place for only God is infinite and omnipotent. And only God is love.

Dear reader, you have read through this little book. You have given serious

consideration to your soul. You are convinced of your present state: you are either lost or saved. You have the hope of heaven or you do not. May we urge you with all the power of persuasion that we have, to not risk another day outside of Christ. Life is fraught with too much danger and uncertainty for you to leave your soul uninsured. Today is the day of salvation. Be saved while you can.