

Heaven or Hell? It's Your Choice

Eternity. How often do we think of it?

We may think of eternity at a funeral when we celebrate the individual's life, knowing the struggles of this life are over and he or she is at home in heaven. Another time we think of eternity and heaven is when we observe the Holy Week events that led up to Resurrection Sunday.

We observe the excruciating suffering and death of Jesus through which He paid our sin debt in full. We rejoice in the empty tomb and Jesus rising in victory for all of His children. This well-known verse gives us the gospel story:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16-17, NKJV).

How often do we think of eternity as a length of time? This is perhaps difficult for our human minds to grasp. A very simple illustration is that our time on earth is a pinprick on the largest ceiling we can think of. Our time on earth is but a fleeting moment when compared to how great eternity will be. Time is short, and tomorrow is not promised.

Every one of us will spend eternity in either heaven or hell. Many of us probably don't like to think of hell. The Bible gives us insight on hell, and we have the choice to pick where we will spend eternity. Luke 16:19-31 tells us about hell and our choices:

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a

certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

"Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

"Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead'" (NKJV).

We see hell, referred to as Hades, as a place of torment and anguish. I can't think of anyone on the face of the earth who would want to be in hell for one moment, much less eternity. God originally designed hell for the devil and all the fallen angels.

The Bible also gives us a glimpse of heaven. It speaks of mansions (John 14:2-3); rejoicing (Ps. 16:11); no more pain, struggles, or tears (Rev. 7:15-17; 21:4); and what it looks like, including the streets of gold (Rev. 21:10-27). This is a

drastic contrast. I believe we would all want to be in heaven for eternity. Honestly, I'm not sure our human minds can grasp how wonderful heaven will be.

It is God's will for all to be saved and join Him in heaven for all eternity. (See 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9.) None of us is perfect; we fall short every day. The only way we are made perfect is by what Jesus has done for all people, from all nations, for all time. Jesus is the One who gave His life so that we may have life.

You may be asking how you can spend eternity in heaven. It's by becoming a Christian, and that is very easy. Just pray a simple prayer from a repentant heart. Please join me:

Dear Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I thank You for dying on the cross for me. I confess with my mouth and I believe in my heart that You are the Son of God. I believe You are the Lord and that God raised You from the dead. Please forgive me of my sins. Wash my heart clean. Come live in my life. Be the Lord of my life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Teach me to walk with You and live for You the rest of my life. Thank You for saving me and for giving me the gift of eternal life in heaven with You. Amen.

Now say, "I am now reborn! I am a Christian – a child of Almighty God! I am saved!" This is a praise-the-Lord moment!

You will never be the same again. Please do find a church that boldly preaches God's Word and obeys it. Become part of a church family who will love and care for you as you love and care for them. And dear friend, we Christians will see you in heaven one day, where we will see Jesus face to face. That glorious and most blessed moment is just the start of eternity.

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believers to share their faith in Jesus with those around them. We have the privilege and opportunity to make an eternal impact. Sheila has also authored Heaven Bound: Walking With the Lord, in which she encourages any believer to grow with the Lord. Her website, , is a resource for you. Sheila encourages you to grab a Bible and learn how great God, in all His love, truly is.

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