

The Eternal Destiny Of Mankind

Introduction:

- A. The Bible teaches that man does not cease to exist when he dies.
 - 1. The fact is that physical death is simply a separation of one's spirit from his body (James 2:26).
 - 2. The body goes into the grave and the spirit is placed in the care of God (Eccl. 12:7).
 - 3. Man's existence does not end when his physical life ends.
- B. Each person will be raised from the dead and judged when Christ comes again at the end of time on the last day.
 - 1. Jesus said that every person who has died, whether good or evil, will come forth from the grave at that time (Jn. 5:28-29).
 - 2. Christ himself will be the judge on that day (Matt. 25:31-32).
 - 3. And, no one will be able to escape facing the judgment of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).
- C. Each person faces a never-ending conscious existence after this short life on earth is over.
 - 1. When should we begin preparing for eternity?
 - 2. We only have once opportunity to make sure that we are prepared (Heb. 9:27).
 - 3. The time to prepare for your eternal destiny is now!
- D. The Bible gives us all of the information we need in order to be prepared to face eternity.

Body:

I. There Are Two Possibilities With Regard To Man's Eternal Destiny.

- A. Each person faces one of two possible destinies (Matt. 7:13-14).
 - 1. One path leads to destruction.
 - a. You have the ability to choose to take the path that lead to eternal destruction.
 - b. This is the final reward the Bible refers to as "hell."
 - c. The unfortunate thing is that most people are headed for this destiny.
 - 2. The other path leads to eternal life.
 - a. You have the ability to choose to take the path that leads to eternal life.
 - b. This is the final reward the Bible refers to as "heaven."
 - c. But the sad part is that only a few people are headed for this destiny.
- B. There is no third option for mankind.
 - 1. The Lord has said that there are only two possibilities.
 - 2. Every person will go to either heaven and face eternal life, or to hell to face eternal destruction.
 - 3. Every person who has ever lived will spend eternity in either heaven or hell.

4. There is no other possibility.

II. Heaven.

- A. The Bible uses the word “heaven” in three different ways.
 1. The sky, where the birds fly (Revelation 19:17).
 2. Outer space, where the stars are (Deuteronomy 10:22).
 3. The hidden, spiritual dwelling place of God (Psalm 11:4).
- B. The final destiny of the saved is in “heaven” in the sense of the spiritual dwelling place of God.
 1. The saved expect to be in heaven with God for eternity (Phil. 3:20).
 2. The hope of the saved is to be in the dwelling place of God for all eternity (Col. 1:5).
- C. Heaven is the only future hope of those who are saved.
 1. The Bible says that there is only one hope for the saved (Eph. 4:4).
 2. The hope of being in heaven with God for eternity is the “one hope” of the saved.

III. What Is Heaven Like?

- A. It is everlasting life.
 1. Jn. 3:16.
 2. Spiritual death is separation from God (Ephesians 2:1).
 3. Everlasting life represents a perfect, never-ending relationship with God.
- B. It is a home with God.
 1. Jn. 14:1-2.
 2. There is room for all the saved in the Father’s house.
- C. It is inheriting the Lord’s kingdom.
 1. Matt. 25:34.
 2. The saved are part of a kingdom that can never be destroyed.
- D. It is an incorruptible inheritance.
 1. 1 Pet. 1:4.
 2. It is a perfect, permanent reward that will not decay, be lost, or grow old.
- E. It is a place of rest.
 1. Rev. 14:13.
 2. Heaven is a place where the saved will find relief from all of the troubles of life on earth.
- F. It is the paradise of God.
 1. Rev. 2:7.
 2. It is a place of perfect, everlasting beauty.
- G. It is a place of constant worship to God.
 1. Rev. 7:9-10.
 2. Those in heaven will be gathered around the throne of God praising him for all eternity.
- H. It is a place where there is no sorrow or pain.
 1. Rev. 21:4.

2. There is no death, suffering, or crying in heaven.
- I. It is a place of unimaginable beauty.
 1. Rev. 21:16-21.
 2. Nothing on earth could ever be as beautiful as heaven will be.

IV. Who Will Go To Heaven?

- A. First of all, most people will not go to heaven.
 1. Matt. 7:13-14.
 2. Relatively few people will choose the path that leads to eternal life.
- B. Those who have no sin will go to heaven.
 1. Sin is the violation of God's law (1 John 3:4).
 2. Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).
 3. Those who are not capable of sinning (ex. Infants) will not be separated from God.
 4. Remember, the guilt of sin is the only thing that will keep a person out of heaven!
- C. Those who receive forgiveness of sins will go to heaven.
 1. All who are capable of sinning have sinned (Romans 3:23).
 2. Christ offered himself as a sacrifice to take away man's sins (Hebrews 10:12-14).
 3. Those who meet his terms for forgiveness of sins will be saved.
 - a. Mk. 16:16.
 - b. Acts 2:38.
- D. Those who are faithful to God will go to heaven.
 1. Rev. 2:10.
 2. The Christian who commits sin must repent and seek forgiveness from God in order to remain faithful to him (1 Jn. 1:9).

V. Hell.

- A. The word "hell" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word "Gehenna."
 1. Gehenna means "Valley of Hinnom."
 2. It was an unclean valley near Jerusalem that was used as a garbage dump where fires burned continually.
 3. It became a symbol of the place of eternal conscious punishment of the wicked.
- B. Jesus spoke of hell more than anyone else in the New Testament.
 1. Matt. 10:28.
 2. Jesus constantly warned against going to hell.
- C. Hell is not the same thing as the grave.
 1. Some people have the idea that when the Bible speaks of "hell" it is only speaking of the grave.
 2. But the Bible uses other words to refer to a "grave" or a "burial place."
 3. Hell is a place beyond the grave.
- D. Hell does not refer to a state of non-existence.

1. Some have the idea that if someone goes to hell he will just cease to exist.
2. But the Bible teaches that those who go to hell will continue to consciously exist there for eternity.

VI. What Is Hell Like?

- A. It is a place of condemnation.
 1. Matt. 23:33.
 2. It is the final abode of those who stand condemned by God.
- B. It is where the wicked of mankind will spend eternity.
 1. Matt. 25:46.
 2. Those who are guilty of sinning against God will face eternity in hell.
- C. It is a place of punishment.
 1. Matt. 10:28.
 2. Hell will be much worse than physical death.
 3. It is a place of everlasting punishment.
- D. It is a place of conscious torment.
 1. Mk. 9:47-48.
 2. Those in hell will suffer never-ending conscious punishment for eternity.
- E. It is a place of everlasting destruction.
 1. 2 Thess. 1:9.
 2. Those who have not had their sins forgiven will face eternal misery in hell.
- F. It is a place to be avoided at all cost.
 1. Matt. 5:29.
 2. The point is that we should do whatever is necessary in order to avoid going to hell.
- G. It is a place prepared for the devil and his angels.
 1. Matt. 25:41.
 2. It is worse than any place we can possibly imagine.
- H. It is a place of outer darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth.
 1. Matt. 25:30.
 2. There is no light and there is nothing pleasant in hell.
 3. It is a place that is filled with terrible sorrow and regret.
- I. It is described as a “lake of fire.”
 1. Rev. 21:8.
 2. It is impossible to imagine anything worse than being submerged in a lake burning with fire and brimstone.
 3. Hell is eternal separation from God, which is why it is referred to here as the “second death.”

VII. Who Will Go To Hell?

- A. Those who do nothing will go to hell.
 1. Matt. 25:41-43.

- 2. Many people either don't believe in hell or don't want to think about hell, so they do nothing to avoid going there.
- 3. If a person does nothing to avoid going to hell, then he will go to hell.
- B. Those who do not know God will go to hell.
 - 1. 2 Thess. 1:6-8.
 - 2. Those who do not have a relationship with God, or who ignore God will go to hell.
- C. Those who do not obey the gospel will go to hell.
 - 1. 2 Thess. 1:6-8.
 - 2. Remember, sin separates man from God.
 - 3. The only way to get rid of your sins is to receive forgiveness from God.
 - 4. The only way to be forgiven is to meet the Lord's terms by obeying the gospel.
 - a. Mk. 16:16.
 - b. Acts 2:38.
- D. Most religious people will go to hell.
 - 1. Matt. 7:21-23.
 - 2. Many people are religious.
 - 3. But how many of them have actually obeyed the gospel?
 - 4. How many religious people have actually met the Lord's terms for forgiveness of sins?
- E. Those who are unfaithful to God will go to hell.
 - 1. Heb. 10:26-27.
 - 2. If a Christian decides to live a life of sin and becomes unfaithful to God, he will be headed for hell unless he repents.
- F. Most people will go to hell.
 - 1. Matt. 7:13-14.
 - 2. Most people in the world prefer to take the easy path now.
 - 3. But the easy path is the path that leads to eternal destruction.
 - 4. They may take the easy path now, but they will have a very difficult time in eternity.

Conclusion:

- A. The teaching of the Scriptures is clear when it comes to the eternal destiny of mankind.
- B. Each of us will spend eternity in either heaven or hell.
- C. But we need to understand that each of us has a choice to make concerning our eternal destiny.
- D. Have you made that choice?
- E. Where will you spend eternity?