

~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

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Prayer

Lord, after what I've read today, I don't want to allow any spirit of compromise in my life. I now understand that the doctrine of the Nicolaitans is compromise with the world. Lord, I don't want to live with one foot in the church and another foot in the world. I want to break free completely from the world and its influence so I can give myself completely to Your cause! I want to be holy, to live in a way that pleases You, and to experience Your power in my life. Today I am renewing my commitment to You all over again! I turn from the world, and I am running to You. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

["The Fulfillment Of A Promise"](#)

Charles Stanley

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Or----

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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1 IS THERE not an [appointed] warfare and hard labor to man upon earth? And are not his days like the days of a hireling? 2 As a servant earnestly longs for the shade and the evening shadows, and as a hireling who looks for the reward of his work, 3 So am I allotted months of futile [suffering], and [long] nights of misery are appointed to me. 4 When I lie down I say, When shall I arise and the night be gone? And I am full of tossing to and fro till the dawning of the day. 5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken and has become loathsome, and it closes up and breaks out afresh. 6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. 7 Oh, remember that my life is but wind (a puff, a breath, a sob); my eye shall see good no more. 8 The eye of him who sees me shall see me no more; while your eyes are upon me, I shall be gone. 9 As the cloud is consumed and vanishes away, so he who goes down to Sheol (the place of the dead) shall come up no more. 10 He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more. 11 Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul [O Lord]! 12 Am I the sea, or the sea monster, that You set a watch over me? 13 When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint, 14 Then You scare me with dreams and terrify me through visions, 15 So that I would choose strangling and death rather than these my bones. 16 I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone, for my days are a breath (futility). 17 What is man that You should magnify him and think him important? And that You should set Your mind upon him? 18 And that You should visit him every morning and try him every moment? 19 How long will Your [plaguing] glance not look away from me, nor You let me alone till I swallow my spittle? 20 If I have sinned, what [harm] have I done You, O You Watcher and Keeper of men? Why have You set me as a mark for You, so that I am a burden to myself [and You]? 21 And why do You not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now shall I lie down in the dust; and [even if] You will seek me diligently, [it will be too late, for] I shall not be.

Chapter 7

Is there not an appointed time to man upon the earth? are not his days also like the days of a hireling? As a servant earnestly desires the shadow (Job 7:1-2),

That is, the shadow of the clock going down so that the shadow disappears. The servant waits for that because he has rest in the evening.

and as the hireling looks for the reward of his work: So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, When will I arise, and when will the night be gone? I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and it's become loathsome (Job 7:2-5).

Now Job is telling about his horrible condition. Clods of dirt are clinging to the sores where they would begin to dry up and then the clods of dirt just clinging there and his flesh all over is just loathsome.

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the cloud is consumed and vanishes away; so is he that goeth down to the grave, he shall come up no more (Job 7:6-9).

Job, you don't know what you're talking about.

He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more. Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea, or a whale, that you set a watch over me? When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; Then you come along and try to scare me with your dreams, and you terrify me through your visions: So that my soul chooses strangling, and death rather than my life. I loathe it; I would not live always: let me alone; for my days are empty. What is man, that you should magnify him? (Job 7:10-17)

Let me say at this point Job is turning from Eliphaz. He said it. He said, "Just leave me alone. I will choose to strangle on my own spittle than to hear any more of your words. Death is better than life." Now he turns to God in verse 17. And addressing himself to God he says, "What is man that You should magnify him?"

and that you should set your heart upon him? (Job 7:17)

Interesting question. What is man that God should exalt man? And that God should set His heart upon man? I liked what Dave said this morning as he was leading us in singing. "And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood? Died He for me who caused His pain." He said he likes to sing that looking in the mirror. "Amazing love, how can it be? That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me." You ought to sing that looking in the mirror. Job is sort of looking in the mirror saying, "God, what is man that You should magnify him or that You should set Your heart upon him?" What am I that God should set His heart upon me? That God should desire my love. That God should desire my fellowship. That God should desire my responses to Him. It's the amazing mysteries of God and I cannot understand it.

And that you should visit him every morning, and try him every moment? How long wilt you not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle? I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee (Job 7:18-20),

And, of course, Job's talking about, it's quite a picturesque phrase for death, "I began to just swallow my own spit. That's it. I can't cough it up any more. I'm gone. I have sinned; what shall I do unto Thee."

O thou preserver of men? why have you set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? Why do you not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be (Job 7:20-21).

So his complaint to God. "Why don't You forgive me, God? Why don't You relieve me of this? What's going on?" And Job is crying out of the misery. (Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)

➔
"Heaven and Hell" J. Vernon McGee

Let me ask a question or two of you now: What do you know about heaven and hell? How much of what you know is scriptural, and how much of your thinking about heaven and hell is due to speculation? How much is due to mythology, to the Middle Ages, to the writings of Dante, or Goethe the German, or Milton the Englishman? How much of what you know is really the Word of God?

May I say that the accretions of men's imaginations and the impressions of time have largely shaped our thinking on both of these subjects. And one of the reasons is that Scripture has very little to say about either of them. Actually, more is said about hell than about heaven, but very little has been said about either one. However, that which has been said is both specific and it's unmistakable. You cannot misunderstand the language. You may not believe it, but you can certainly understand what's being said.

Our subject is not as simple as it may appear. For example, we need to distinguish between the intermediate state and the eternal state after death—there is an intermediate state for both the saved and the lost. Then there are different classes of creatures. There are angels, and they are divided into the fallen and the unfallen. There are the Jews, and they're divided between the remnant and those who are lost. There are Gentiles, and they are divided into the saved and the lost. And then there is the church. So when you talk about heaven and hell you have to think of these different classes and different groups.

Also we must know the meaning of certain words in Scripture pertaining to heaven and hell. One is sheol, another is hades, and then there are gehenna, tartarus, and hell; also heaven, the kingdom of heaven, and the heavenlies. May I say, we need to be able to distinguish and know these different areas we're talking about.

Hell.....

Now I want to preface what I have to say with this remark: There is nothing more repulsive to the natural man than the subject of hell. There is no subject that causes him to rebel more than this one. It's very interesting. I have noticed that on the radio I can speak on any subject under the sun and find a certain amount of agreement. But the minute I touch on the subject of hell, that changes.

I spoke on it the other day, and it triggered several letters; someone wrote me a poem; someone else called me at home. In fact, they said things like, "You belong to the Middle Ages; you're not up to date. Apparently you haven't done any thinking recently. Don't you know that no intelligent person today speaks of hell, that it is absolutely a figment of the imagination?"

These kinds of reactions don't disturb me anymore, because if they reacted any differently I'd know there was something wrong. The natural man must inevitably rebel against this. He'll see red when you begin to talk on this subject. May I say that if you are reading this today and you're not a child of God, you'll not like what I'm going to say right now, I can assure you. The fact of the matter is that inside you will be rebelling against it.

What we are talking about is the subject of divine retribution, not punishment. When you talk about hell being a place of divine punishment, it gives the idea of discipline and that hell is a place where people are being disciplined. That is not true. It's divine retribution. It is a place of judgment, and it's not a place of discipline in any sense.

Actually, the more refined, cultured, and genteel people are, the more likely they'll rebel against this subject. That is the reason some lovely, refined folk who move so evenly on other subjects, at the mention of hell, respond so vehemently. For the unsaved person, it is a natural reaction—it couldn't be otherwise. Their argument will go something like this: "I believe in a God of love, and a God of love would never have a place like hell." May I say that if that were all that could be said about God, it would be true. But they forget that God is holy. They forget that God is righteous. They forget that God is enraged against sin. They forget that God cannot tolerate sin at all.

I've heard this kind of argument many times—generally coming from some soft-spoken person, but, oh, they get exercised over this subject! They say, "Do you think that I'd take one of my children and put my child in hell! Don't you know God would never do a thing like that!" That's the type of reasoning we hear. The answer, of course, is very simple. When a person says, "I would not put my child there," the answer is, "You are not God, and you do not know what is involved."

Friend, there is no other topic where a person reveals what a small comprehension he has of God and His infinite holiness. And he has no comprehension of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. As a result, the human family rebels against this and is not willing to leave matters like this in the hands of a God who has revealed to us certain great facts concerning hell.

Let me draw to your attention a verse of Scripture which Moses wrote:

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deu 29:29)

The secret things belong to God. And there are many things that God has not taken time or seen fit to reveal to us at all. It's in these areas that He expects us to trust Him implicitly. In fact, here's where we reveal faith, and here is where the lost reveal rebellion against God. When Satan began to attack Job, and when God commended this man, one of the things He said concerning Job was that he had not charged God foolishly. Job never got to the place where he said, "God is being unfair to me. God is being unjust. God is not doing right." Job did get to the place where he said, "I don't understand what's happening to me, and I don't understand why God is permitting it." But Job said this: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him! I have confidence in Him" (Job 13:15). You see, that man is right with God. Job did not rebel; he did not charge God foolishly. May I say to you, Christian friend, you need to be very careful in your conversation, especially with the lost man. He can detect immediately the rebellion that's in your heart because it's in his heart also. And if we have that rebellion in our hearts, when we say, "Why did God let this happen to me?" we are charging God foolishly, you see. We are not trusting Him. Now there are some basics that we need to nail down. The first one is, God is holy. The second is, God permitted sin. And the third is, God gave Christ to die. Those are three great facts that we have to face. Ours is the holy God, and God did permit sin, and God gave Christ to pay the penalty for us. And if God today can let one person escape divine retribution, then the Cross of Christ was a blunder. God made a big mistake in letting His Son die on the cross if there is some other way even one person could slip into heaven without turning to Christ and accepting His gift of salvation.

Anything but Hell

In the presence of this awful reality of hell and of the Bible revelation concerning it, many people have offered certain theories to offset the scriptural doctrine, and I'm going to suggest several of them to you. There is no Bible basis for any of these. They are pure speculation, and there is not a scintilla of fact for them. The first theory is annihilation, and there are those today who say that they believe in utter annihilation; that is, that death is the cessation of existence, that man dies just like an animal dies. There are multitudes of folks who are living like animals and would like to believe it is true that death would end it all. But may I say to you, as far as the Word of God is concerned, there is no support for that sort of theory at all. Another viewpoint is transmigration of the soul; that is, at death the soul passes into another body. When I brought a message on this subject several years ago, I was surprised to find the number of people in Southern California, members of Protestant churches, who believe in this. May I say, it's paganism and it's Buddhism. It is said by some scholars who know Buddhism from beginning to end that this matter of transmigration is not in the Vedic scriptures at all, nor do you find it anywhere in Buddha's writings. It is something that has grown up as a tradition. It has led, of course, to this other explanation of nirvana—that you keep moving, and when you die your soul will go into an animal. This is the reason they don't kill a cow in India—it could be your mother-in-law, so you have to be careful about those things. Then it is believed that after each death the soul moves on again, and finally it just ends up in nirvana, that is, total extinction. This is the reason that a great many people right here in the United States will stand on their heads in the morning and practice yoga. That is where they learn to just think, to contemplate, to spend time in meditation. The teaching is that if you just keep meditating and keep thinking, preparing yourself, one of these days you will meditate out into nothing. This, of course, has no scriptural basis; it's paganism from beginning to end, and it's amazing to me. I talked to a young man who has practiced yoga, and he believes in transmigration. He approached me after the message I had brought on it, and he wanted to talk about it. And I said to him, "On what basis?"

"I reject the Bible doctrine of hell."

"You do?"

"Yes, I reject the Bible doctrine of hell."

"All right. Now then, would you give me the facts for what you do believe? What is the basis of your belief?"

And he had none!

It's amazing to me that intelligent people will reject the Word of God—a document that you can have confidence in—and they will turn their backs on truth and pick up an absolutely baseless theory. Why? Because the natural man hates the idea of hell and will believe anything in order not to believe in a hell. If a person believes in a literal hell, he is open to hear the gospel. A man said to me: "If I believed in hell as you believe in hell, of course I would turn to Christ. But I don't believe in it." That's the natural man. Conditional immortality is another explanation that bypasses the reality of hell. It teaches that the grave is hell for the lost. You are acquainted with a cult that promulgates this—they probably knocked on your door last Saturday morning. Their belief that the grave is hell for the lost has no scriptural basis. It is almost asinine to use the Scriptures they point out in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. As I was talking to one of those folks, I said, "Can't you find something better than that? It's obvious when you turn to the Books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs that you are quoting from a writer who says he is talking about life under the sun. He's talking about this life, this physical life. So with that understanding, when you say that death ends it all, it is true as far as this life is concerned. You won't be able to come back and do it over, brother, but the very minute you leave this life, you are going to move on to somewhere else, and that's your problem." That is the difficulty these people face, and they would like to think that death ends it. Oh, my friend, these folks are in deep darkness or they would see the abundance of Scriptures that contradicts them. That, by the way, is the theory of conditional immortality. Then there is universalism, a doctrine that says all men will eventually be saved. That is, Christ died for all, therefore all are saved, and they will live happily ever after. A great many theological liberals actually take that position. To them the matter of this life and of Christianity is just a jolly nice

thing, you know, and we don't want to talk about hell, it's an ugly, repulsive subject.

I was very much interested in talking with a family in a church in Fullerton where I was holding meetings. They were telling me that they had been in a certain denominational church in which they were hearing strange teaching from the pulpit. So they went to this pastor because they suspected he was even teaching Marxist propaganda. They asked him about some things, and one of their questions was, "Do you believe in heaven and hell?" His answer is quite interesting. He said, "I do not believe in heaven and hell, either one. I believe in putting the emphasis on here and now." Then he added, "If you want to hear about heaven and hell, go down to the Church of the Open Door and hear that fellow McGee. He preaches on that." Well, they took his advice. In due time they received Christ as Savior and later became members of that fine church in Fullerton where I met them. They didn't miss a service during the four nights I was there. May I say to you that universalism, which was founded in the eighteenth century to uphold belief in universal salvation, fails to teach Bible truth. It is a very nice sort of optimistic way of life; the only thing that's wrong with it is it's not true! There is no basis for it anywhere except in their imaginations. You couldn't ground it in fact anywhere. There is abroad also a theory called restitutionalism, which holds that eventually all mankind, all angels, and even Satan will finally be reconciled to God. Right here in Southern California, a proponent of this contacted me after reading my published message, "Will Everybody Ultimately Go to Heaven?" Someone had sent him the booklet. I've had some correspondence with that man, and he has been quite exercised about the subject, but he admits that he and his father made the statement on radio that both Satan and Judas would walk arm-in-arm down the streets of the New Jerusalem someday. I asked him for his Scripture for that one, and although he hasn't given it to me yet, restitutionalists generally do use Scripture to support their theory. This is their favorite verse:

... until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. (Act 3:21)

They say, "Here you can see exactly what Peter said. He said there is to be the 'restoration of all things.'" They need to look at Act 3:21 again. It is "the restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." All things that the prophets said would be restored are going to be restored.

Paul clarifies this by using the same expression in another matter. Look at Phi 3:8 where he wrote: "I have suffered the loss of all things." What did he mean? Did Paul own the world? No. Well, what was it Paul lost? He suffered the loss of all the things that he had to lose—that's all! He couldn't lose what he didn't have.

Likewise, Act 3:21 speaks of the restoration of all things that the prophets prophesied would be restored. These will be restored. Nothing else will. And nowhere does any prophet say that the lost are ultimately to be restored. May I say to you that the very verse of Scripture used by the restitutionalists, instead of carrying out their thought, confirms the opposite.

Restitutionalists also rely heavily on another passage.....

... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phi 2:10-11)

The restitutionalists say, "You see that every knee must bow to Him in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, so that the lost ultimately are going to come to Him." May I say again, that is false reasoning, which is made evident by Col 1:20:

... and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

When Paul is talking about reconciliation through the blood of Christ, it is things in heaven and things on the earth, but not things under the earth. When he talks about how every knee must bow and acknowledge the lordship of Jesus, he includes the lost. And I say to you that the devil and his angels and all the lost are going to have to bow and acknowledge the lordship of Jesus, but that does not mean they are saved. That does not mean they are reconciled with God. In fact, these two verses of Scripture make it quite obvious that Paul never taught that the lost would be restored.

May I say to you, restitutionalism is purely a figment of the imagination. Isn't it amazing what folks will believe when they don't want to believe the Word of God? That's the natural man, and that's the natural mind. It will do anything rather than believe God!

There is a sixth theory used to offset the scriptural doctrine of hell, and that is purgatory. It teaches that purgatory is a place you go when you die, and there you will suffer for the sins you committed after you were baptized. This theory says that Christ's death covered your sins before baptism but not after you were baptized. You must suffer for those sins yourself in purgatory until you are fit for heaven. For some people that could take a long time. However, if you are smart, you will wait until you get on your deathbed before you are baptized so you can't commit any sins before you die, and therefore you will miss purgatory altogether. Purgatory is nowhere mentioned in the Scriptures, but it appears in one of the apocryphal books. It's been, of course, developed through the years and has led to this matter of praying for the dead, because prayer is made for the release of those who are in purgatory. May I say to you that there is no scriptural basis for purgatory whatsoever, but you can see how it has softened the viewpoint concerning hell. Those are six of the major detours folks will take in order to avoid the clear and explicit teaching of the Word of God on the subject of hell. Let me add this: I do not believe that any saved person can take any delight in the reality of hell, and certainly we ought not to handle it in that way. It was said of Dwight L. Moody that he was the only man who had the right to preach on hell. Friends, it is a solemn, heartrending subject, and Moody preached it that way. What the Bible Says About Hell. You may reject the Word of God, but you cannot reject the fact that the Word of God has some very clear statements on hell. First, hell is a prepared place. May I add this right now, and this is the language of the Lord Jesus: 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." (Mat 25:41)

The two individuals in the Scriptures who taught more on the subject of hell than any others were the Lord Jesus Christ and John, the apostle of love. In fact, if you take out of the Bible what they had to say, you will have practically nothing left on the subject of hell. They are the two who emphasized it, and when people talk today about the "gentle Jesus" and about following His teaching, what do they mean by "following His teaching"? It will lead you then to believe, and to know, that hell is a reality, my beloved.

The second fact concerning hell is that it is not only a prepared place, but it is also eternal:

And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Mat 25:46)

And John wrote this about the last days:

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Rev 20:10)

Now, my beloved, there's no way in the world of toning that down and trying to make it temporary. These verses mean exactly what they say.

Not only is hell a prepared place, and not only is it an eternal place, but it is a place of retribution. Let me give you some of the statements that are used concerning it. In Luk 16:28 it's called a "place of torment." In Mat 25:41 it's called "everlasting fire." In Mar 9:44 it's "where the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched"; in Rev 21:8, "the lake which burns with fire and brimstone"; Rev 9:2, "the bottomless pit"; Mat 8:12, "outer darkness," a place of "weeping and gnashing of teeth"; Luk 3:17, "unquenchable fire"; Mat 13:42, "furnace of fire"; Jud 1:13, "blackness of darkness"; and Rev 14:11, "the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night." May I say that this is solemn language indeed! Hell is a place of retribution.

Four Different Words

Now let's consider these four Bible words: sheol, hades, gehenna, and tartarus. These four words we need to know because they explain a great deal as far as the subject of hell is concerned. First of all, let me say that sheol is the Hebrew word and hades is the Greek word, and unfortunately both are translated hell in many places. But although they mean the same thing, they do not mean hell as we think of it today.

I want you to note that they do mean the same thing. The psalmist in his prayer has written:

For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

(Psa 16:10)

When that same verse is quoted by Peter, it is:

For You will not leave my soul in Hades,

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

(Act 2:27)

Sheol and hades are used synonymously, And they are used sometimes, if you please, to refer to the grave; that is, where the body is placed. I could give you at least fifteen examples, but let me give you just two. First,

But he [Jacob] said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave [sheol]." (Gen 42:38)

For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks? (Psa 6:5)

By the way, the second is one of the verses that Jehovah's Witnesses use for their doctrine of extinction, that the grave ends it all. May I say that the reference, of course, is only to the body in this particular passage. A corpse is incapable of giving thanks.

In addition to the grave where the body is placed, sheol is also used to describe the place where the lost go, and a great deal is said about that. I could give you at least twenty-five verses, but I don't want to weary you:

The sorrows of Sheol [hell] surrounded me;

The snares of death confronted me.

(Psa 18:5)

Now sheol is the place where the dead go, and it's divided into two compartments. (see diagram)

You are, I'm sure, familiar with the record our Lord gave about two men who died, a rich man and a man by the name of Lazarus who was a beggar. It is found in Luk 16:19-31. Jesus said that when these two men died, this is what happened: One of them, the rich man, went to a place of torment. The other, Lazarus, went to Abraham's bosom, which is also called paradise. The unseen world (hades in the Greek language and sheol in Hebrew) refers to both compartments. Half of sheol or hades is called "a place of torment," and this is where the rich man is. This is not hell, my beloved, but it is where the lost go today. They do not go directly to hell at all.

Now may I mention briefly the other two words for hell that we have in Scripture. gehenna is a place of burning. It was in the Valley of Hinnom, a narrow ravine outside Jerusalem where city refuse, including bodies of beggars, was dumped and burned. Our Lord used it to picture hell.

tartarus is found only once in the Scripture, and that time it was used by Simon Peter:

God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [tartarus] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment. (2Pe 2:4)

The Old Testament saints were taken to paradise, called Abraham's bosom. They will not be raised bodily until Christ comes to establish His Kingdom. Then they will be raised from the dead. Since Christ's ascension into heaven, no believer has ever had to go to sheol. The Word of God says concerning believers today that they are

absent from the body ...present with the Lord. (2Co 5:8)

The following passage has caused some folks confusion, giving the impression that when Jesus died, He descended into the place we think of as hell.

Therefore He says:

"When He ascended on high,

He led captivity captive,

And gave gifts to men."

(Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He

also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?)

(Eph 4:8-9)

"When He ascended on high" refers to the ascension of Christ. He did not go into hell as we think of it. Rather, as He told the thief on the cross (see Luk 23:43), He descended into paradise, that section of hades where the saved were, to announce to them the deliverance that He had wrought for them, and at His ascension He led them "captivity captive" into God's presence.

But the lost who are in the place of torment today, we are told in Rev 20:11-15, are to be judged at the Great White Throne, and then they are to be cast into the lake of fire.

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the rake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:13-15)

The lake of fire is eternal.

Beloved, it is tragic beyond imagination to fail to receive Christ as your Savior!

Heaven.....

There are many who are willing to accept the fact of heaven while rejecting the fact of hell. Let me say again, Christ and the apostle John said more about hell than any others in Scripture. Yet neither said very much about heaven.

Apparently there is an intermediate state of the saved. I'm not sure that I know what Paul meant when he wrote 2 Corinthians 5; but I want us to consider carefully what he has written, and let's see if we might arrive at some sort of conclusion.

For we know that if our earthly house, this tent [skenos in the Greek, which refers to the body, the flesh], is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2Co 5:1)

But the earth He has given to the children of men.

(Psa 115:16)

God has not given the heavens, these outer spaces, to mankind. He hasn't made our bodies for it.

Then there is the second heaven, and that is the heaven up yonder in the galactic systems of this universe, out beyond our solar system.

And beyond that there is the third heaven, and that is the place to which Paul said he was caught up. Evidently the throne of God is there. Paul said he saw things that he could not speak about. This third heaven is the abode of God.

Here are two Scriptures on that:

The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men,

To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

(Psa 14:2)

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;

The Lord shall hold them in derision.

(Psa 2:4)

This makes it clear that heaven is the abode of God.

Now here is something I'd like for you to note. The earth will be the eternal abode of Israel—that is, saved Israelites. And it will be heaven, as far as they are concerned. When we as children of God say, "I want to go to heaven," we are going to a prepared place. But it is not for the nation Israel. The Old Testament believer, for instance Abraham, never had any idea he would leave this earth. He had no expectation or hope above this earth. God never told him, "I go to prepare a place for you."

And the Lord said to Abram [Abraham], after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.... Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." (Gen 13:14-15, Gen 13:17)

In other words, God said to Abraham, "Look about you. This is the land I have given to you for an eternal possession. This is your land."

And when God made the covenant with David that there would be One on this earth to sit on his throne, David said, "That is my salvation. That's my hope for the future." They had no hope above this earth at all. And saved Israel, including the Tribulation saints, will be here on this earth. And after God makes it a new heaven and a new earth, this is going to be a pretty nice place to live. And then I think you and I would enjoy it here also, but this won't be our place.

The New Jerusalem, which will come down from God out of heaven, will be our home. Apparently this New Jerusalem will become the center of this vast universe because God is going to be there.

So You Want to Go to Heaven

My friend, you say that you want to go to heaven. First of all, God says that heaven is a prepared place for prepared people. You and I have to be prepared for heaven. God cannot take us there the way we are now. If today God lifted up your church to heaven just as it is on a Sunday morning, what would you have? Heaven? No, you would have your church, and that's not heaven. Consider this:

We also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. (Rom 8:23)

We have to be prepared for heaven.

As someone has well said, we are going to get our space suits and take off. I think that is a very appropriate figure of speech, because these bodies that we have now are adjusted for only this earth, you see. They are set for us to go at this speed down here. But the body we shall get in the future will be a body prepared for the New Jerusalem.

Also, within ourselves we have to be prepared: Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1Jo 3:2) Have you ever stopped to think of your position in heaven? Not only do the people in heaven have to be prepared, but also their position in heaven must be determined. Remember that our Lord Jesus is going to give rewards. One of the last things He said was: "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me" (Rev 22:12). Will you get a reward? Not everyone will. But He will give rewards to those who have earned them. There will be no idleness in heaven. There will be rest, but rest and idleness are not the same. We are going to rest, but actually, what is it that disturbs us and wearies us mostly today? Isn't it all our frustrations and our irritations down here? Up there we'll be free from those and have a new body! My beloved, I don't believe there will be any idleness at all.

There will be recognition of others. Our faculties will be sharpened.

Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (1Co 13:12)

That is when we will reach the place of supreme fulfillment.

I was talking to some friends in Santa Ana the other night, and I made this statement, "I wouldn't want to live my life over, but honestly, I would like to go back and make some corrections."

Wouldn't you? Would you like to go back and make a few corrections? May I say, it is going to be wonderful to get to a place where there will be no frustrations, but there will be the supreme fulfillment of life.

And heaven is going to be a place of love. To me the wonder of that is that everybody is going to love me in heaven! That's going to be wonderful, friend. And everybody will love you. Love is going to make heaven a very wonderful place. And everything will be there to delight the person. As I said, there will be no irritation. Nothing there to trouble you. No worries, no bother. Everything there will be for your delight and for your enjoyment.

And to top it all, Christ is there—what a glorious reality!

And thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1Th 4:17)

I would like to close this message on heaven and hell by reminding you that you are going somewhere when you die. I know a lot of people who like to think that death ends it all. But, my friend, if you are banking on that and then find out you were wrong, you'll be awfully wrong, won't you? It's a terrible thing to be lost and not know your way in this world today. But it is tragic beyond imagination to be eternally lost.

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 772-773)

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