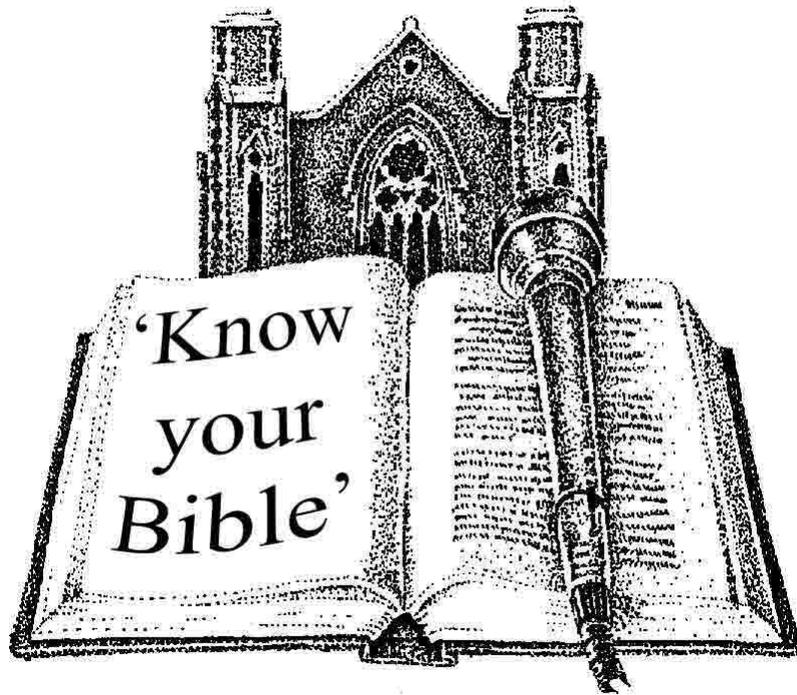


Where Do We Go From Here?

Sermons Notes by Stuart Olyott's



Where Do We Go From Here?

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Where Do We Go From Here

No1. Death

- The Christian life has tenses, past - present - future.
- This series is about the future, of ourselves, and of the world
- Both Testaments have a great deal to say on this subject. The truths they reveal have a powerful effect on our lives.

Seven common questions about death

How often does it take place?

- Twice every second!
- It will soon be **my** turn!

Why does it happen?

It is not a natural phenomenon - but a divine appointment which is part of God's angry punishment and curse upon our sinful race *Hebrews 9:27, Genesis 2:17, 3:19, Psalm 90:7-12.*

What different reactions are there to it?

- The 'Christian scientist' says it is unreal
- The escapist tries not to mention it
- The fatalist acts bravely (but see *Isaiah 57:21*)
- The blatant unbeliever curses it
- The pessimist puts himself to death
- The sentimentalist sobs over it
- The religious fanatic tries to get martyred (but see 1 Corinthians 13:3b).

What is to be the Christian's attitude?

- He does not seek it; This unnatural event will take place in God's time.
- He knows he will not enter it alone. *Psalm 23:4, Romans 8:35-39*
- He is strengthened by considering the comforting manner in which God's Word speaks about the death of believers: - e.g. *Psalm 116:15, Luke 23:43, Philippians 1:23.*

Can we define what death is?

- We must first reflect on man's original constitution *Genesis 2:7*
- His make-up is twofold - body and soul/spirit. *1 Corinthians 6:20*
- 'soul' and 'spirit' can be used interchangeably. *Luke 1:46-47*
- DEATH is the separation of body and spirit - *Ecclesiastes 12:7, Matthew 10:28.*

Why do some people teach that the soul does not survive death?

- Either because they flatly reject the Bible (e.g. behaviourists)
- or because they misinterpret what it says (e.g. the so-called 'Jehovah's Witnesses and their Interpretation of Luke 23:43, and Ecclesiastes 3:19-20)

What does the Bible teach?

- That death is not the end of the human spirit *Ecclesiastes 12:7*.
- That believer's never die. *John 11:25-26*
- That when people's bodies are in the graves, they themselves remain alive. *Matthew 22:32*.
- That nobody goes 'out of existence' at death. *Luke 16:19-31*
- There are many other Bible references which prove the same thing. We will look at some of them in the coming weeks.
- But what happens to souls in 'the intermediate State' between death and the resurrection?
We will look at this over the next two weeks,

Where Do We Go From Here

No. 2 The Intermediate State - part 1

- We have seen that when we die although our bodies are soon destroyed, we ourselves remain alive (for we are body and spirit).
- Eventually body and spirit will be reunited at the resurrection
- But what happens to our spirits until then?
- We now come to answer common questions on this point :-

Seven questions specifically about BELIEVERS in the intermediate state

Where will we go?

- To paradise. *Luke 23:43.*
- To Abraham's bosom. *Luke 16:11.*
- These are simply other names for heaven. *2 Corinthians 11:2, 4, Matthew 8:11, Hebrews 11:10, 16.*
- Where we shall be with the Lord. *2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23.*

Will we be conscious or asleep?

- Death **is** sometimes spoken of as a sleep. *Deuteronomy 31:16 Acts 7:60, 1 Thessalonians 4:13.*
- This is because the dead look asleep, and their condition is temporary.
- But the Bible is perfectly plain that we will be awake. *Luke 16:19-31, 2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23, Revelations 4-5, 7, 12.*

What will life be like without a body?

- Such a condition unnatural but only temporary. *2 Corinthians 5:1-8*
- We shall remember. *Revelations 6:9-11, Luke 16:28.*
- Our minds will be geared to a different time scale. *Revelations 6:9-11.*
- Faith will have become sight. *2 Corinthians 5:7*
- Hope will have been fulfilled. *Romans 8:24-25*

What will we do?

Key passages on this point are Revelations 7:9-17, 14:13.

- We will commune with Christ in a state of bliss, worshipping and serving him
- We will rest - from toil, pain, sorrow and trouble

Will we know each other?

- Our chief desire should be to depart to be with Christ *Philippians 1:23.*
- Yet that enjoyment will be communal. *Revelations 7:9-17.*
- Mutual recognition is a clear feature of the Intermediate state *Luke 16:19.*
- The angels (who have no bodies) recognise each other (*Daniel 10:13*), so why shouldn't we?

Will we have any contact with those still on earth?

- Spiritualists say 'yes' but Scripture forbids us to have anything to do with their practices. *Deuteronomy 18:9-15.*
- Roman Catholics invite prayer to saints - but Scripture acknowledges God alone as hearer of prayer. *Psalms 65:2.*
- There is some evidence that departed believers are spectators of our Christian lives. *Hebrews 12:1-3.*
- But to us they are 'asleep', and there is no contact between us. *1 Thessalonians 4:13.*

Note: the witch of Endor did not raise Samuel, but a lying spirit, to speak to King Saul. Study carefully 1 Samuel 28.

Will we be able to make further spiritual progress?

- There will be no progress in sanctification - for there is no sin in heaven and all who are there are perfect in holiness. *Hebrews 12:23*.
- The human soul remains forever finite; but Christ's love is infinite (*Ephesians 3:19*). It is therefore quite possible that in eternity we will advance in knowledge, love and joy.

We still have more unanswered questions. What happens to unbelievers at death? and children? and those who have never heard the gospel? and is there such a place as purgatory? These and other questions we hope to answer next week.

Where Do We Go From Here

No. 3 The Intermediate State - part 2

We have seen that

- When our bodies die, our spirits live on
- They will be reunited at the resurrection
- We have seen what happens to the spirits of Christians until then.

We now come to some more common questions about the intermediate state

What happens to the unconverted when they die?

They go immediately to hell. *Psalm 73:12-19, Luke 16:23, 29, Acts 1:25.*

This truth is always greeted with strong objections:-

- "God is love". Yes, but He is also just
- "Everlasting punishment is not just". Every sin is an infinite sin.
- "It would not accomplish anything". It upholds God's justice.
- "God will save everyone in the end". He will not. *Matthew 25:41, 46.*
- "The words 'Sheol' and 'Hades' Simply mean 'the grave'"
- sometimes they do, *Genesis 44:29, 1 Samuel 2:6, Acts 2:27,31,*
- but elsewhere they definitely mean a place of punishment for the wicked. see *Proverbs 5:5, 7:27, 15:24, 23:14.*

Is there such a place as Purgatory?

- The Roman Catholic Church believes in a middle state of temporary punishment where deceased believers suffer purifying anguish before going to heaven. The duration and intensity of the punishment varies. It can be shortened or lessened by masses said friends on earth. The pope may also lighten or end a person's suffering there.
- All who do not believe this are automatically excommunicated from Rome.
- Rome appeals to 2 Maccabees 12:43-45, Matthew 12:32, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.
- Rome's teaching is heresy. Man can in no sense save himself. *Romans 3:21-27.*
- ALL the sins of the Lord's people are forgiven. *1 John 1:7.*
- There is NOTHING more for them to pay. *Hebrews 9:12, 26, 10:14.*
- When believers die they go **straight** to heaven. *Luke 16:22, 23:43, 2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23.*

What about those who have never heard the Gospel?

- They cannot be saved unless they hear the Gospel and come to Christ. *Romans 10:9-17.*
- In the meantime they are without excuse, *Romans 1:18-32,*
- They do not even live up to the light they have, and are perishing. *Romans 2:12-16.*
- But their punishment will not be as severe as those who **have** the Gospel, and reject it. *Luke 12:47:48, Hebrews 10:29, 2 Peter 2:20-22.*

What about those who die in infancy?

- If children were not sinners they could not die. *Romans 6:23.*
- The Roman Catholic Church teaches that they go to "Limbus Infantum"
- This is a sheer invention
- We know that whatever God does is just. *Genesis 18:25.*
- Beyond that there is little we can say, except that David seemed to nurse the hope of seeing his child again (*2 Samuel 12:23*); Jesus had a special place for children (*Luke 18:15-16*); and heaven will be very full. *Revelation 7:9*
- We hope that infants are saved but cannot go beyond the Book
- Certainly "Elect Infants, dying in infancy.... are saved by Christ" (Westminster Confession).

Will those who die unsaved have another chance?

- The state of unbelievers after death is a fixed state. *Luke 16:19-31.*
- They are kept under punishment until the final judgement. *2 Peter 2:4, 9.*
- Nothing awaits them but the blackness of darkness. *Jude 1:13.*
- After death comes, not another chance, but one Judgement! *Hebrews 9:27.*
- The day of salvation is now - not at **any** future date. *Psalms 95:7, 2 Corinthians 6:2.*

Where Do We Go From Here

No. 4 Signs of the Second Coming

The resurrection, of which we have spoken, will take place at the time of the Second Coming. Will we know when it is near? Tonight we look at two key passages on the subject:-

What Matthew chapter 34 tells us :-

The chapter is about 2 subjects

- The destruction of Jerusalem
- and the Second Coming & end of the world (3).

Everything up to Vs 34-35 is about the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, for Jesus pledged that all he had so far mentioned would take place during the lifetime of those hearing Him (34).

- That event would be preceded by signs: false Christ's (4-5). wars, famines, pestilence's, earthquakes (6-8) persecution and apostasy (9-13)
- The gospel preached to all nations (14) - the abomination of desolation (15) - great tribulation (16-22) - false prophets, (23-34) - sun and moon darkened (29) - Son of Man coming on cloud (30-31)
- When they saw these signs, they were to know that the destruction of Jerusalem was near (33-33)
- We must be careful; we have been brainwashed into thinking that all these things are signs of the Second Coming, that we have forgotten what our Lord **actually** said,

Everything from v36 is about the Second Coming day and of the world - "THAT day and hour"

- The expression is a common one for that event. Matthew 7:22, 11:22, 24.
- Its time is completely unknown to anyone but God (36)
- It will happen when life is going on **as normal**, and will therefore take the unbelieving world by surprise (37-41).
- This being so, there is only one attitude to adopt - perpetual readiness (42-51)
- This point is underlined by Christ's parable of the 10 bridesmaids which immediately follows in 25:1-13.

We are not to look for signs, but to be ALWAYS ready! Are you?

What 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 tells us :-

Christians do not need to fear that the Second Coming will take them by surprise, because certain things must happen first (1-3)

- First of all there will be a period of apostasy (3), a falling away from the faith by professing believers.
- This will be followed by the emergence of an individual who will be the very embodiment of rebellion against God's law (3)
 - A hellish, hell-bound person (3)
 - Against God, and taking the place which belongs alone to God (4)
 - Controlled by Satan (9)
 - By signs and wonders leading astray masses, to their eternal damnation (5-11)
 - As Paul wrote, this person's emergence was being held back by a thing (6) and a person (7) - probably law and order founded on justice. When that goes, the ensuing lawlessness will be the womb from which this man comes.
- He will be dealt with by our Lord Jesus Christ, at His Coming (8)!

Further light on the Antichrist

- This final Antichrist will be preceded by other antichrists (*1 John 2:18*), faith-opposing individuals motivated by the same spirit. (*1 John 2:22, 4:3, 2 John 1:7*.)
- Or, as Daniel put it, the 'horn' (*Dan 8*) will be preceded by many a 'little horn' (*Daniel 9*). Each will cruelly persecute God's people until cut off by God (*Daniel 7:25, 12:7*) - the last One, of course, being cut off at the moment of the Second Coming (*2 Thessalonians 2:8*)
- Who can say whether any particular apostasy is the **final** apostasy? or whether any particular individual is **an** antichrist, or THE Antichrist?
- This is why we can say that there are **Signs** of the Second Coming - and yet **no definite signs!**
- The ONLY acceptable attitude is a cautious determination to go through suffering for Christ - and CONTINUAL EXPECTANCY!!

Where Do We Go From Here

No. 5 What about Israel?

Why raise this subject?

Many people consider that the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 was a fulfilment of prophecy) and heralds the near return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Others expect to see the Jews turn to Him in large numbers shortly before His return.

We therefore set out to state some clear principles on this subject.

What is a Jew?

God's Word gives us a definition in Romans 2:28-29. True Jewishness is not a question of national privileges or of physical signs (2:17-27) but of the heart being right with God, and of living to His praise. In God's eyes these are the only Jews that exist.

See also Romans 4:11-13, 22-25, Galatians 6:14-16, Philippians 3:3, Hebrews 12:22.

What is Israel?

It is not the earthly nation. God has left that desolate (*Matthew 23:38*), wrath has come upon it to the uttermost (*1 Thessalonians 2:16*), and the kingdom of God has been taken from it and given to the Gentiles (*Matthew 21:43*). This explains Paul's agony in Romans 9:1-5.

TRUE Israel has never been composed of earthly descendants of Abraham but of the individual men and women chosen by God to share his faith. Most of them today are Gentiles (*Romans ch 9*).

Has God completely finished with the Jews?

This question is answered in Romans chapter 11. Within the earthly nation God has always had a **few** who belonged to Him - an elect remnant (which included Paul himself). Unbelieving Jews have been stripped from God's olive tree, and replaced by believing Gentiles. Every person in God's true Israel is a **believer**, and there will always be some Jews amongst them.

What about the 'restoration prophecies'?

- Many of these were fulfilled at the end of the Babylonian exile, and many others carried conditions which the earthly nation never kept. But what shall we say about the rest?
- The apostles did not interpret the Old Testament as do some modern prophetic 'scholars'. They knew that the prophets wrote about things they did not fully understand themselves, and used the only language open to them.
- What the prophets wrote regarding the Jews, the apostles interpreted of the TRUE Israel - **the church**. What the prophets wrote concerning the Promised Land the apostles interpreted of the **spiritual privileges** of the gospel (of which the Land was but a picture). For two excellent examples of this compare Joel 2:28-32 with Acts 2:14-21 and Amos 9:11-15 with Acts 15:13-17.

In what ways should this teaching affect our attitudes?

- We should witness to Jews. They need the Gospel to be saved. God has His elect amongst them, and some of them will be converted.
- We should not take any special interest in the modern state of Israel, and should certainly not identify the gospel with pro-Israel politics. Instead; our energies should be harnessed to building up the **church** of the Lord Jesus Christ - world wide.

Where Do We Go From Here

No. 6 What is 'The Millennium'?

The word 'millennium' is an ordinary English word, meaning a period of a 1000 years. Such a period is mentioned six times (Vs 2-7). What **is** the millennium mentioned there?

A common view

Many people believe that this chapter teaches that in the future Christ will reign on earth a thousand years with his resurrected saints. During this time there is earthly peace and the fulfilment of many prophecies. Satan is imprisoned throughout the period, but at the end is released for a short while, leads the nations in rebellion against Christ's beneficent rule and is finally thrown, with his allies, into the lake of fire.

Fatal objections

- Such people admit that the key, chain and seal are symbolic, but most of the rest of the chapter is literal
- They totally fail to see that numbers are used symbolically throughout the Book of Revelation
- They overlook that the reign mentioned is one of **souls**, on thrones (which everywhere else in the book are in **heaven**)
- The chapter only mentions two companies in verse 4, and by no stretch of the imagination can that mean ALL believers, as is assumed,
- The theory is self-contradictory. The particular groups of verse 4 are said to have been raised **after** other believer's - so how can THAT be described as 'the first resurrection'?
- Think of the paradoxes that the theory of an earthly rule of Christ gets us into :-
 - He who said His kingdom is not of this world has an earthly kingdom!
 - Glorified saints found on an unglorified earth!
 - Saints with glorified bodies side-by-side with those who have not!
 - The whole world submitting to Christ, and yet in heart still His enemy, because they immediately follow the devil when loosed!

This common view is fallacious nonsense, and we must reject it.

A closer look

- Up to the end of chapter 19 we have read of the defeat of the Devil's agents (dragon, beast and false prophet), but not of the Devil himself. We come to it now
- Chapter 20 begins a seventh parallel vision which scans the whole period from Christ's first coming to His second, as do the others. It is easy to see how 'a thousand years' is symbolic of this period.
- As elsewhere throughout the book, this period can be looked at from 2 perspectives - the earthly; and the heavenly?

The earthly aspect (Vs 1-3, 7-10).

- By His sufferings, Christ has conquered Satan, and cannot fail to secure the spoils of His conquest. *Matthew 12:26-29, Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14, John 12:31, 16:11*
- He is active (*1 Peter 5:8*), yet chained (*2 Peter 2:4*).
- His particular restraint is that he cannot stop the world-wide spread of the gospel; or bring about the final conflict (which he will lose) until God's time (3, 7-15)

The heavenly aspect (4-6).

- Verses 4-6 are an obvious parenthesis (compare 3b and 7a)
- It describes the heavenly reign of glorified believers.
- They are those who have experienced the first resurrection (*John 5:25, 28-29*), while all others are dead are dead in EVERY sense until the end of the thousand year period.

- **The lesson** is that Christian martyrs enjoy reigning with Christ so why be afraid to be one?
- The gospel will spread, so why be afraid to join in spreading it?
- Evil, even after a final unloosing, will be put down. So why be afraid to resist it?
- God is the only and final Judge of all. So should you not live your life loving and serving HIM?

Thus, a correct understanding of this passage about 'The Millennium' does not lead to irrelevant time tabling of the future but to A TRANSFORMED LIFE!

Where Do We Go From Here

No. 7 The Second Coming

Tonight we come to consider our "blessed hope" (*Titus 2:13*)

The basic teaching - 7 questions

WHO will come again?

The Son of Man (*Matthew 25:31*); the Lord who comes to reward His servants (*Matthew 25:21-23*); The bridegroom (*Matthew 25:1*); "this same Jesus" (*Luke 24:51, Acts 1:11*)

HOW OFTEN will He come again?

He will come as He went (*Acts 1:11*) - only once.

When He come again?

We have already examined this point in detail (Message No 4 Signs of the Second Coming) but constantly need to be reminded of the teaching of *Matthew 24:36 - 25:13*.

FROM WHERE will He come again?

He will come from where He has gone - heaven Itself (*Acts 1:9-12, Luke 24:51, Hebrews 4:14, Ephesians 1:21*).

TO WHERE will He come again?

Our Lord's feet will again stand on this earth (*Job 19:25, Acts 1:11, Zechariah 14:4*)

HOW will He come again?

His coming will be physical and visible (*Acts 1:11*) and indescribably glorious (*Matthew 25:31, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10*).

WHY will He come again?

- To judge the living and the dead (*Matthew 25:31-46, 2 Timothy 4:1*)
- To take His people to their home (*John 14:3, 2 Thessalonians 1:10*)
- To Inflict just punishment on all unbelievers (*2 Thessalonians 1:7-9*)
- To make all things new (*Revelation 21:5*).

Two common queries

What is Armageddon?

Har-Magedon is where God stepped In to defeat Israel's enemies in a famous Old Testament battle (*Judges 4:12-16, 5:19*). It is thus the symbol for every situation where God rescues His people from their oppressors - just as Ho will do in the final oppression by the Antichrist (*Revelation 16:12-16*).

What is 'The Rapture'?

Some Christians teach that there will be **two** Second Comings!! - a first which they call 'The Rapture' (Jesus coming FOR His people) - and a second which they call 'The Revelation' (Jesus coming WITH His people).

They say that the Lord will come invisibly and silently to take Christians from the earth only to return seven years later WITH them, to fight Antichrist, resurrect those converted in the seven-year absence and to begin the 'millennium.'

BUT

- We have seen already that the Second Coming is a **single** event. Jesus will come WITH His saints (spiritually present with Him,) FOR His saints (those still alive on earth; and to reunite the others with their bodies)
- See the following points in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 :-
- Those who have died are the ones He will bring with Him
- Such will suffer no disadvantage by having died, because Christians still alive at the Advent will have to wait a moment while those who died re-Inhabit their bodies.
- TOGETHER, as one large multitude, the two groups will go forth to meet the Lord.
- Nothing secret or silent, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is "the noisiest verse in the Bible"! The Second Coming will be **public** and **audible**, and there is no mention of two separate halves, with seven years in between!

“And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words”.

Where Do We Go From Here

No. 8 The Resurrection

Recap: the Intermediate State

At death we do not reach our final state, nor do we remain as we were. It is therefore an intermediate state - between our present and final states.

- You are not just a body, but body and spirit. *Genesis 2:7.*
- Death is the separation of body and spirit
- The body returns to the dust, and sees corruption. *Genesis 3:19, Acts 13:36.*
- Believers, without their bodies, pass into glory. *Hebrews 12:23, Philippians 1:23, Luke 23:43*
- Unbelievers begin their torment. *Luke 16:19-31.*

The Bible contains no mention of either soul-sleep or purgatory

As far as the body is concerned - death is the same for believers & unbelievers.

As far as the soul is concerned - death is entirely different for the two.

The body is not forgotten

- Not only the spirit matters to God, but also the body - the whole person
- To be with Christ, but without a body, is to fall short of our ultimate hope *2 Corinthians 5:1-8*
- The believer longs, not for the intermediate state, but the final state - the resurrection. *Romans 8:23, 2 Corinthians 5:4.*
- He may be certain that this will take place, and that he will have the glorious body he waits for - *Job 19:26-27, John 5:28-29, 1 Corinthians 15:49-58, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 3:1-3.*

The main points about the resurrection

- The fact of the resurrection is clear, although it is a truth offensive to the unconverted. *Daniel 12:2, Acts 24:15, Revelation 20:11-15, Acts 17:32, 26:8.*
- The manner of the resurrection is revealed to believers, although little is said on this point about unbelievers. *1 Corinthians 15:35-58, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 3:1-3.*
- The certainty of the resurrection rests upon the already accomplished resurrection of Christ. *1 Corinthians 15:12-13, 15-16, 20-23*
- The time of the resurrection is the end of the world, but people will be raised in a certain order *John 5:28-29, 1 Corinthians 15:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*
- The effect that resurrection truth should have on our earthly lives is also made plain. *1 Thessalonians 4:18, 1 Corinthians 15:18-19, 31-32, 55, 58*

But why must believers die?

Death is the 'wages of sin', and Christ has borne our sin - so why do we need to die?

Be sure of this :-

- Death will one day lose all power over the believer. *1 Corinthians 15:26*
- Even now, it has already lost its sting. *1 Corinthians 15:55-56.*
- If you die, even this will be for your good. *Romans 8:28*
- And you will be no further from God's love. *Romans 8:38-39*

Remember this:-

- Death is not something which happens at the end of life - It is the state we are in by nature, of which physical death is the logical consequence. *Genesis 2:17, Ephesians 2:1*
- When we are saved we are delivered from the spiritual condition called death. *John 5:24, 1 John 3:14.* This is the first resurrection. *Revelation 20:5.*
- But we are NOT YET delivered from the physical condition called death. In this way both saved and lost live side-by-side in the world, and God's method of saving (the preaching of His Word by mortal men) continues.
- But just as He HAS delivered our souls from death's power, He WILL deliver our bodies *John 5:25-29*

Where Do We Go From Here

No. 9 The Judgement

The Last Judgement is certain

- It is as certain as death. *Hebrews 9:27*
- God has fixed the day and appointed the Judge! *Acts 17:31.*
- It will take place at Christ's second coming. *2 Timothy 4:1, Matthew 25:31-46.*
- It will be preceded by the Resurrection. *John 5:26-29.*
- It will be followed by the dissolution of the present universe. *2 Peter 3:7*

All of us will be present

- All nations will be there *Matthew 25:32*
- And every person. *Romans 14:10, 12, 2 Corinthians 5:10.*
- Every work will be judged. *Ecclesiastes 12:14.*
- Even the fallen angels must face that judgement. *2 Peter 2:4, Jude 1:6*

It will be an awful day

- It is the day for God's righteous judgement to be unveiled. *Romans 2:5-6.*
- Every thought (*1 Corinthians 4:5*), secret thing (*Ecclesiastes 12:14*), word (*Matthew 12:36, Luke 12:3*) and action (*Revelation 20:13*) will be judged - justly! (*Genesis 18:25*)
- Christ's word will witness against those who have rejected Him. *John 12:4*
- all will be found guilty, and all excuses will die on our lips. *Psalms 143:2, Romans 3:19.*
- "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God". *Hebrews 10:31.*

Believers will be acquitted - and rewarded

- For there is no condemnation for them. *Romans 5:1, 8:1.*
- Christ will present them guiltless *1 Corinthians 1:8, 1 Thessalonians 3:13*
- This because the punishment that their sins deserve has fallen on the Lord Jesus Christ. *Colossians 1:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10.*
- And so they will enter glory. *John 14:1-3, Revelation 21:1-4.*
- Nonetheless every Christian's work will be scrutinised *1 Corinthians 3:9-14*
- And there will be rewards for faithful service. *Matthew 25:19-23, Revelation 11:18.*
- It will have been worth serving Christ!! *2 Corinthians 1:14, Phil 2:16.*

Unbelievers will be condemned - and punished

- For them the Last Day will be misery *Revelation 1:7*
- Their punishment will be terrible. *Romans 2:8-9, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, Jude 1:14-15, Revelation 20:11-15.*
- Those who had the most light will receive the worst punishment. *Matthew 11:20-24, Luke 12:47-48, Hebrews 10:26-27.*

Therefore :-

- Meet the Lord in mercy now, lest you meet Him in anger then! *Isaiah 55:6-7.*
- Live holily, as those who are certain to be judged. *2 Peter 3:11, 14, 2 Corinthians 5:9-10.*
- Out of compassion for the perishing, give yourself to evangelism. *2 Corinthians 5:11*

Where Do We Go From Here

No. 10 The final state of the wicked

Tonight we consider the unpleasant truth of Hell, in order to avoid it ourselves, and to warn others about it.

Jesus taught that there is a Hell Matthew 5:22, 10:28, 13:40-42, 48-50, 23:33, 25:30, 41, 46

If there is NO Hell

- Jesus Is NOT the Infallible Son of God
- The Bible Is a deception
- And there is no hope of any sort for anyone

Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot cover up the unpleasant truth of everlasting punishment

Unsaved people enter damnation as soon as they die

Luke 16:19-31 makes clear that there is :-

- No annihilation
- No soul-sleep
- No second chance
- No purgatory or limbo

It teaches that :-

- What you are when you die you are eternally
- There is no delay between death and damnation
- The punishment Is awful, without respite or interruption
- Where there is no hope, but there is the ability to remember ...

Then comes the Judgement

- The dead will be raised *Daniel 12:2, John 5:28-29*
- People will be brought from death and hell, and those not in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire *Revelation 20:11-15*

And afterwards, the final state of damnation

- Place names are used to describe it - Hades/Sheol, Tartarus, Gehenna, furnace of fire, lake of fire
- A place of physical suffering, pangs of conscience, anguish, despair, weeping and gnashing of teeth. *Matthew 8:12, Mark 9:43-48, Luke 16:23, 28, Revelation 14:10-11, 20:13-15, 21:8.*
- A place where the punishment will be uninterrupted and eternal. *Matthew 18:8-9, 25:46, Mark 9:43, 48, Luke 16:26, 2 Thessalonians 1:9, Revelation 14,11, 20:10*
Eternal!!

God is just to punish eternally

- Sin is an offence against an infinite Person.
- It requires infinite punishment
- Besides, sin continues in Hell. *Revelation 22:11, 15.*

A loving God CAN send people to Hell

- His love has been shown in sending Christ. *John 3:16*
- He is not willing that any should perish. *2 Peter 3:9.*
- He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. *Ezekiel 33:11.*
- Men and women go to Hell, not because God wants them to, but because they OUGHT to - because of their sins.
- God is holy, just and true. Sin MUST be punished. *Romans 6:23, Numbers 32:23, Galatians 6:7.*
- Sinners would be unhappy in heaven...
- Heaven would not be the heaven that God has promised, if there were sinners there

But :- The Lord Jesus Christ promised "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that hearth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto LIFE." *John 5.24.*

Where Do We Go From Here

No. 11 Heaven.

Heaven is not something that will be; but something that IS.

- It is an entirely different realm; dimension; sphere of existence (Jacob; Isaiah; Stephen; John).
- Real (*Hebrews 8:5*), holy (*Deuteronomy 26:15, Psalm 20:6*), eternal (*Ps 89:29, Deuteronomy 11:21*)

It is the dwelling place of God.

- God is constantly said to be 'in heaven'. *Matthew 5:16, 6:9, 12:50.*
- So are His angels. *Matthew 18:10, 22:30.*
- He is the Lord of heaven. He reigns there, and all His will is done there. *Daniel 4:35, 5:23 Psalm 11:4, Matthew 11:25.*
- His presence glory and majesty fill the place. *Jeremiah 22:24, Hebrews 8:1.*
- From there He speaks to men and women. *Hebrews 12:25.*
- And from there He sends His judgements. *Romans 1:18.*

It is where the Lord Jesus Christ came from and where He now is...

- He came from heaven. *John 13:3, 1 Corinthians 15:47.*
- He continued to exercise His heavenly powers. *John 3:13*
- He returned there. *1 Peter 3:22.*
- He is still there. *Acts 7:55.*
- Interceding for us. *Hebrews 9:24.*
- Preparing a place for us. *John 14:2-3.*
- Ruling there. *Matt 25:40, 28:18, 1 Pet 3:22.*
- He will return from there. *1 Thessalonians 4:16, Philippians 3:20.*

It is a place beyond our mortal understanding

- Paul was caught up into heaven, and witnessed things which cannot, and must not, be put into words. *2 Corinthians 12:1-4*
- The Word of God uses pictures to give us a faint understanding of what it is like, a barn (*Matthew 3:12, 13:30, 43*); the Father's house (*John 14:2*); a city, heavenly Jerusalem (*Hebrews 11:16, 12:22*); a country, better than anything here on earth (*Hebrews 11:16*), an inheritance of treasure (*1 Peter 1:4*).

Some people are going there.

NOT :-

- Those connected with the Devil and his angels. *Matthew 25:41.*
- Those who live sinful lives. *Galatians 5:19:21, Ephesians 5:5.*
- Those who have not been born again *John 3:3*

BUT :-

- Those whom God has forgiven through the blood of Christ. *Ephesians 1:3-12.*
- Those who hear the Gospel, and believe on God's Son. *John 3:16.*

Such believers are already heirs of heaven. (*Matthew 25:34*), enrolled in heaven (*Luke 10 10:20*), citizens of heaven (*Philippians 3:20*), and knowingly going to heaven (*Hebrews 13:14*)

We know a little of what they are going to

- To the unveiled blessing of the Father. *Matthew 25:34.*
- To all that they ever hoped for. *Colossians 1:5.*
- To their reward. *Hebrews 10:34-35.*
- To their treasure. *Matthew 6:20.*
- To the sight of the Lord!! *John 17:24.*
- The present physical heavens and earth will pass away, and will be renewed. Righteousness will dwell in them. *Matthew 19:28, Acts 3:21, Romans 8:18-22, Hebrews 12:27, 2 Peter 3:13.*
- THEN the New Jerusalem will descend out of heaven from God, and the redeemed will enter their final joy. *Revelation 21 and 22*
- The present distinctions of material/spiritual, visible/invisible will be wiped away and God will be all in all

We know how we should live in the meantime

- We are not to be obsessed with the things of this passing world. *Hebrews 10:34.*
- Our thoughts are to be fixed constantly on the things of heaven. *Colossians 3:1-4*

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. *Hebrews 13:13-14.*