

**"The Beginnings
of Faith"
(#5)**

- 1—A Stable Faith (Survey Last Lessons)
- 2—One Hope versus Many hopes
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- 4—The Resurrection of our Body
- 5—The Surety of the Judgment
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"A Stable Faith"

All we do as Christians is to build, grow, and stabilize our faith in Christ! A stable faith is described with various terms:

Col. 1:23 _____

Col. 2:7 _____

1 Cor. 15:58 _____

A stable faith is one that has proved itself and can be depended upon. One of the key terms that describes this condition is "faithfulness!"

The wise man threw out a very pertinent question: ***"Who can find a faithful man?"*** The word for man is used in its generic sense which includes both men and women.

--Why would he ask such a question?

--Are such people scarce?

--Is it too hard for people to be faithful?

As we look closer at this concept, we need to define the term. How would you define it? _____

The Scripture speaks of certain Ones being "faithful!"

Ps. 119:86 _____

Hebrews 3:5 _____

Hebrews 2:17 _____

"Faithfulness" is said to be a _____ of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22).

Derivation of the word comes from the concept of faith, belief, trust. To be faithful is to be "full of faith!"

What do the following Scriptures say about "faithfulness?"

Col. 2:5 _____

Col. 1:23 _____

1 Tim. 3:11 _____

What is God calling on his people to be?

1 Cor. 4:2 _____

Rev. 2:10 _____

Heb. 3:14 _____

Many of the early Christians faced strong trials and temptations that tried their faith in God. Because we live in a time of relative peace and prosperity, our faith

may not be put to the test as strongly as some of them faced. But what would be our decision if we had to endure the kind of hardship that they faced? _____

Would we deny our commitment to Jesus? _____

If we are tempted to complain about services lasting a few minutes longer, what would we do if we faced real hardship as a Christian?

If we complain because the building gets too hot or too cold, what would we do if we faced terrible persecution for Christ? _____

Have we grown too soft? _____

Are we too caught up in this materialistic age? _____

If we are addicted to our material things, what would we do if suddenly we were called upon to surrender them all up in order to be faithful to Christ? _____

1 John 2:15-17 _____

FAITHFULNESS IS A VIRTUE

1. Because there are so few (Prov. 20:6). _____

2. Because God praises men by calling them faithful!

Col. 4:7 _____

2 Tim. 2:2 _____

3. Because blessings are promised upon the faithful!

Rev. 2:10 _____

Prov. 28:20 _____

Ps. 31:23 _____

Ps. 101:6 _____

Matt. 25:21 _____

4. Because such are like God!

Lam. 3:23 _____

Ps. 119:138 _____

CONTRAST

The Faithful (Matt. 25:21) _____

He was given a job to do and he did it well.

He was dependable.

He did what was expected of him.

The Unfaithful (Luke 16:1-2, 10-12)

He was a wasteful steward and did not do his job well.
If not dependable in few things, he won't be over many.
Faithful men and woman can give a good accounting.

Dan. 6:4

He was true to his responsibilities—no fault found.
He was honest to the core.

It seems to be obvious that God judges more by man's character than by the number of talents, abilities, opportunities that he has. (Matt. 25).

God has had recorded in His Book of Life the lives of many who have been faithful in their service to Him. As far as we know, all of the Apostles (except for the John) faced persecution and died a violent death because of their devotion and service to Jesus, the Son of God. He had recorded in Heb. 11 a long list of men and women that were examples of faithfulness. The chapter ends with these wonderful words:

"Of whom the world was not worthy!"

(Heb. 11:38)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We trust and pray that God may continue to grant us the opportunity to serve Him in quietness and peace. But, if the time should come when our faith will be challenged to the fullest, may we be prepared and faithful to the end.

- o What about your life—could it be looked upon as a faithful Christian?
- o Can people see in your life that trustworthiness, dependability, and steadfast obedience to Christ's Will?
- o Or, do they see **wavering, uncertainty, on & off, Hot & Cold, and Instability?**

Stability and Faithfulness are virtues! They are there in a person's life because he wants them there. And they are there because he has seen the value of stability and faithfulness in his own life and in the lives of others as well.

Let's be Stable and Faithful People!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. Men are more faithful than women.
- ___ 2. A person can be faithful and not believe in God.
- ___ 3. Faithfulness is something that God gives to His people.
- ___ 4. Hardship can test a man's faithfulness to God.
- ___ 5. The complaints of many Christians are insignificant as compared to what the early Christians faced.
- ___ 6. It is not wrong to "love the world" because God loved the world and gave His Son for our redemption.
- ___ 7. Faithfulness is consider a virtue because there are so few people who could be considered faithful.
- ___ 8. There are no guaranteed blessings to be given to the faithful.
- ___ 9. There is very little contrast between the faithful and the unfaithful.
- ___ 10. Daniel was a "fair" example of a faithful person.
- ___ 11. The character of a person becomes the chief means of judging a person.
- ___ 12. The world does not deserve to have faithful Christians in it.
- ___ 13. Heaven is promised only to the "faithful!"

Lesson Two

"One Hope versus Many hopes"

Human beings are creatures of motivation—*"What's in it for me?"* We have to see some value or purpose for doing things. Why should I want to live a righteous life? Why should I deny myself the indulgence in all the tempting activities of this world? The question of why continually comes up and demands some kind of an answer because we are creatures of motivation. Our children continually remind us of this fact by their wanting to know why, why, why?

The Bible talks about the "one hope" (not many) of the Gospel—that is, the hope of Heaven. There are various Bible terms that express this idea of the "one Hope"—"everlasting life" (Matthew 25:46), "many mansions" (John 14:1), "new Heaven and Earth" (2 Peter 3:13), etc. If you were to ask someone, *"Do you want to go to Heaven?"*—I think that a large % would definitely say "yes!" A survey was conducted among 500 persons that desired to be preachers. Here are four of the questions and their response:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| 1) Is there life after death? | (No—8%) | (Yes—92%) |
| 2) Is there a Judgment Day? | (No—39%) | (Yes—61%) |
| 3) Is there a Hell? | (No—69%) | (Yes—31%) |
| 4) Is there a Heaven? | (No—41%) | (Yes—59%) |

While they seem to be confused on their Bible knowledge, it is hoped that they can become more knowledgeable before they begin to preach. Survey after survey shows a high % of people that do say "Yes!" Going to Heaven is one of the great motivating factors that God has placed before us to get us to live righteous.

We can be motivated by various things: money, desire for education, thrill or excitement, profit, fear, love, etc. We can also be motivated to do various things: to go to work, to go to school, to dress neat, to make plans and carry them out, to buy, to sell, etc. When you see a sloppy, lazy, spineless, dirty quitter—you see someone not motivated. Give him the right motivation and his life will be changed.

God uses many things to motivate us: fear of punishment, gratitude and thankfulness, sense of duty, rewards, blessings, etc. Possibly, our greatest motivation is Heaven. Heaven is God's "carrot stick" to lure us unto Himself. It is God's answer to man's question: *"What's in it for me?"* *"Why should I serve God?"* *"Why should I want to be a Christian?"*

One Hope

"...always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). "Hope" is a strong underlying concept in our lives whether we recognize it or not. However, the word is used in different ways, so it is necessary to clarify what we are talking about when we discuss the hope that is in us.

1. People often say: *"I hope you are okay"* (wishful thinking).
2. Others may say: *"I am hoping to inherit a lot of money"* (A desire, but not something that is certain).
3. When we talk about our hope in Christ, we are referring to a hope that is built upon strong evidence (certainty).

Biblical hope or the "one hope" of the Christian is based on firm evidences to give us assurance of what is ahead for us. This evidence is in various forms:

1. Old Testament passages that show the dependability of God's promises (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).
2. The assurance that God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18).
3. The assurance of a resurrection unto Judgment (John 5:28-29; Rom. 1:4).
4. The assurance of a resurrection unto eternal life with God (1 John 5:13).
5. Our hope is also based on our belief (obedience) or faithfulness (Rev. 2:10).

We are actually being exhorted to give a defense for our hope (1 Pet. 3:15)—that is, to give reasons for having this hope (Rom. 8:24).

We are Saved by This Hope!

Rom. 8:24 states that we are saved by hope! It gives us great motivation to continue faithful to the end. It is worth the price that must be paid to receive this hope at the end of life. However, it is important to note that we have not yet received what we hope for. Hope ends when we receive that for which we hope (Rom. 8:24-25). With a strong confidence in this hope, we can:

1. Live with confidence and face the future with courage;
2. We can meet life's trials and challenges triumphantly;
3. We can walk in the light daily (constantly) with assurance;
4. We cannot turn our back on God, but constantly submit to His will;
5. We can be assured of the continual cleansing by the blood of Jesus.

There has to be a reason for doing what we do. If we doubt our hope, there is a

grave danger that we will fall away and lose our hope. It is important that we hold our confidence steadfast to the end (Heb. 3:12-14). The Hebrew writer also reminds us that the Israelites that came out of Egypt did not get to receive their hope because of their unbelief (doubt) or disobedience (Heb. 3:18-19).

We have "One Hope" not many!

One of the many grave problems with the teaching of "Pre-Millennialism" is that it advocates more than "one hope." We are promised eternal life with God if we are faithful to the end—**that is our "one hope."** All that Jesus went through or endured in his life was to make this hope a reality for us some day.

1. He was born as a human and developed as a man.
2. He enjoyed and endured all that humans experience.
3. His life was one of perfect obedience to His Father's will.
4. He died a horrible death for our forgiveness so we could have this hope.
5. He was buried and raised from the grave to give full assurance of our own resurrection unto everlasting life.
6. He ascended up on high in order to send the Holy Spirit back to us to teach us and guide us unto this everlasting life.
7. 1 Tim. 3:16

Thus, as the apostles went out to preach this inspired message to mankind, they did so not only with boldness, but certainty (Acts 4:17-20; 4:29-31). Jesus' resurrection from the dead is our assurance that death does not end it all for humans who believe in God. Thus, when death would visit a family in the 1st Century Church, they had hope that their loved one(s) (who was a faithful Christian) would spend eternity with God (1 Thess. 4:13-17).

Concluding Thoughts

We all have learned that life is not just a "bed of roses!" It has its trials, tribulations, and heartaches. What is it that keeps us living, working, and striving to live righteous lives? It has to be the "one hope" that we hold on to desperately that gives meaning to all that we have to deal with in this life. This hope keeps us faithful to God! But so does the fear of facing God in judgment and being punished with everlasting death. We believe that we will be given either everlasting life (to be with God for ever) or everlasting death (to be away from God for ever) (2 Thess. 1:7-9). The two terms that the Bible has used and have become the most used by our generation are "Heaven" or "Hell!" (Matt. 25:41, 46). We determine our own destiny by what we chose to believe and how we chose to live. Have we chosen wisely? We need to keep our "one hope" strong!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. We do not have to have reasons or evidence to believe in everlasting life.
- ___ ___ 2. There is no way for us to know that God does not lie.
- ___ ___ 3. Believing in everlasting life is a matter of choice—not forced upon anyone.
- ___ ___ 4. People cannot give a reason for their beliefs because they are not interested sufficiently to know the basis of their beliefs.
- ___ ___ 5. The Scriptures do not teach that "hope" saves us.
- ___ ___ 6. Hope ends when we receive that for which we hope.
- ___ ___ 7. The Christian's "one hope" is to be given everlasting life with God.
- ___ ___ 8. To have doubts about our hope in Christ is to show our "unbelief!"
- ___ ___ 9. Pre-Millennialism teaches more than "one hope."
- ___ ___ 10. Heaven and Hell are the two terms that are used by our generation to indicate where one's final destiny will be after death.

Lesson Three

"The Unseen Realm of the Dead"

The Scriptures teach that man's body will be raised and changed into an immortal body. But what about the "spirit" or "soul" of man, what happens to it until the resurrection of the body? Does our "spirit" die? Or, does the "spirit" survive the death of the body? It is the "spirit" that gives life to the body; but the "spirit" without the body causes the body to cease its activities on earth. The Scriptures teach that the body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26). I have not been able to find where the Bible states that the spirit is dead apart from the body.

Old Testament Emphasis upon the State of the Dead

Can a "spirit" still exist without a body? To ask it, is to answer it! God is a Spirit and He exist! (Jn. 4:24). Angels are created spirit beings and they exist! (Isa. 6:1-3). Samuel, the Prophet, died and he spoke to King Saul and said: ***"Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shall you and your sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."*** (1 Sam. 28:19). Samuel was dead physically, but he still was in existence. Saul and his sons were killed in battle that day, but the next day they would be where Samuel was. Just where was Samuel?

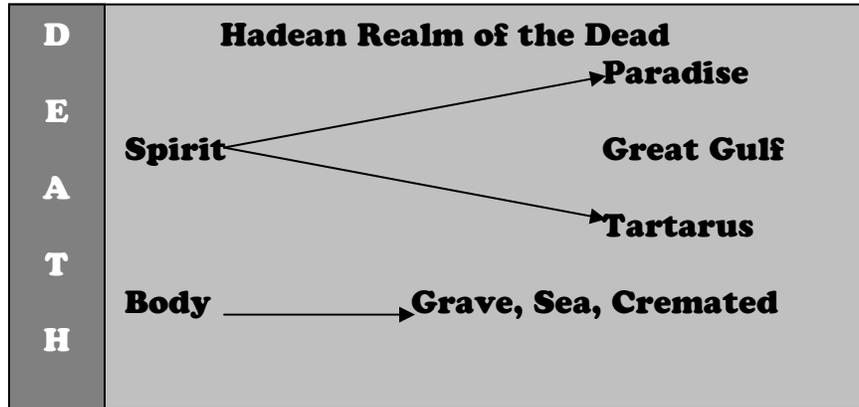
Indications from Jesus about the State of the Dead

Jesus stated upon one occasion: ***"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.....God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."*** (Matt. 22:32). He makes a point of the tense of the verb—**Presence Tense!** God did not say ***"I was"*** but ***"I am"*** their God! Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still "living" when this statement by God was made! What was "living?" The logical answer is that the spirit of man was still "living." But where?

Where does the Spirit go upon Death?

It would seem to be obvious that the spirit survives the death of the body. So, is it "asleep" like the body? ***"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."*** (Dan. 12:2). It is the body that is asleep, not the spirit! This expression is never used with reference to the spirit, but only the body.

Some insight, but not clearly, is given in the book of Ecclesiastes: *"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."* (12:7). This states that the spirit of man goes back to God, but in what sense? Do all spirits go to Heaven? If so, both good and bad go to Heaven! Jesus commended His spirit to the Father in His death: *"Father, into your hands I commend My spirit; and having said thus, He gave up the spirit."* (Luke 23:46). Where did Jesus' spirit go upon death? He told the thief on the cross that they both would be in Paradise that day (Luke 23:43). Peter stated that Jesus' soul was not left in Hades (Acts 2:31). In the Greek language, Hades is where the person goes upon death—not just to a grave! Jesus' body went into the grave, but His spirit, along with the thief's spirit, went into Paradise or Hades. The layout below will hopefully help you to envision what we are about to go into detail upon.



CAUTION! Humans think in terms of places, events, time, etc. God is accommodating to us and uses human terms about Himself, such as: He has arms, hands, head, feet, etc. God is also accommodating us by describing a "place" where our spirits go. In our thinking, man's spirit must go some place—so, God accommodates us and describes a place. In the Old Testament, the word "Sheol" was used. It appears about 65 times and is erroneously translated "Hell." When the Greek New Testament quotes the Old Testament word "Sheol," it uses Hades. Both Sheol and Hades are "Neutral terms." Both righteous and wicked spirits go into Hades. But Hades seems to be divided into two compartments:

1. **Paradise**—Where the Righteous spirits go.
2. **Tartarus**—Where the Unrighteous spirits go.

Hades is not the final state of man's existence, but a temporary one. It is an unclothed state (2 Cor. 5:1-8). In the final state (Heaven), we will be clothed upon with a new body.

The Angels that sinned in the rebellion against God have been cast down into "Tartarus" awaiting the judgment! If this is where the sinful Angels are, it is probably where the sinful people are also?? (2 Pet. 2:4). They will both received a similar eternal fate in the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41).

Conditions in Hades

The story that Jesus told about two men (the Rich Man and Lazarus) helps to give us some insight into the conditions in Hades.

1. The Rich man was in Hades in Torment! (Luke 16:22-23)

**2. Lazarus was in "Abraham's Bosom" where he was comforted!
(Luke 16:22, 25)**

Both went into the Hadean realm, but one was comforted (Paradise) and the other tormented (Tartarus)(Lk. 16:19-31). It is also significant that there is a great gulf between these two so that there is no crossing back and forth (Luke 16:25-26). Evidently, there is no second chance after death! May we suggest the following:

- 1. All go to Hades upon death.**
- 2. There is a conscious existence of the spirit.**
- 3. The Righteous are comforted.**
- 4. The Unrighteous are tormented.**
- 5. They retain their identities.**
- 6. They are able to communicate and recognize one another.**
- 7. People are still on earth.**
- 8. But no return nor communication is allowed with the living.**
- 9. They retain their memory.**
- 10. They are awaiting Judgment.**

Conclusion

From the above information, may we suggest the following thoughts:

- 1. Those who are in torment in Hades don't want their loved ones to go there!**
- 2. Those who are in comfort in Hades have a very joyous place to await for the resurrection and would like for all whom they know to be there with them.**
- 3. Everyone makes the choice where they want to go upon death by the way they live upon earth.**

Consider these Scriptures: Job 14:20-22; Eccl. 9:5-6; 1 Pet. 3:18-20; 4:6; Heb. 4:1-6; 1 Pet. 1:10-12.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. The spirit apart from our body is said to be dead.
- ___ ___ 2. A "spirit" cannot exist without some kind of a body.
- ___ ___ 3. The Old Testament Scriptures gave no indication of an existence of the "spirit" after the dead of the body.
- ___ ___ 4. When Jesus pointed out that God is the God of the living he stated that God is obviously not the God of those who are dead.
- ___ ___ 5. The Bible talks about the body sleeping after death, but not the spirit.
- ___ ___ 6. When the Old Testament says that the "spirit" returns to God, it means that God can re-use that "spirit" again.
- ___ ___ 7. Jesus did not have a "spirit" like we do; and that is the reason His "spirit" could go to God.
- ___ ___ 8. Hades and Sheol are neutral terms and have reference to the same thing.
- ___ ___ 9. Paradise and Tartarus are more specific "places" that the "spirit" goes upon death.
- ___ ___ 10. The fallen Angels are said to be held captive in the place called "Tartarus!"
- ___ ___ 11. In reality, both the "Rich man" and "Lazarus" were in Hades.
- ___ ___ 12. To be in a place of comfort is not to be in a place of torment.
- ___ ___ 13. All human beings that die go to Hades with no exceptions.
- ___ ___ 14. In the "spirit world" we will retain all of our memory.
- ___ ___ 15. There is an indication that we will recognize one another even in the "spirit world."

Lesson Four

"The Resurrection of our Body"

God has ordained that all shall die (Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:27); but, He has also ordained that all men will be raised from the dead (John 5:28-29). It does not say "some," but "all" will be raised! The "all" here is talking about those who have died—all of these will be raised. Obviously, those still alive at Jesus' return will not be "raised," but "changed!" (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

Most references in the New Testament that speak about the resurrection are explaining what will happen to the Child of God. We know that all will be raised, but we do not know for certain (it may be inferred) how the unrighteous will be raised or changed. This is the mistake of those who teach a doctrine called "the Rapture"—because 1 Thess. 4:13-17 is only talking about the righteous. It does not say what will happen with the unrighteous. They have built a doctrine on their imagination, not the Scriptures. There are several general passages that indicate that there will be a resurrection of both—at the same time! John 5:28-29 states—"***the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth.***" Acts 24:15 states: "***There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.***"

The Graves Will be Empty

Every grave yard will give up their dead, as well as the Sea! (Rev. 20:13). That which went into the grave was our physical body. The resurrection is talking about raising up our bodies. "***And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be.***" (1 Cor. 15:37). Just like a grain of corn, it is planted in the ground, but it comes forth a new plant to produce corn. But, the identity is there! Our physical bodies constantly change over the years, but it is still our physical body. The identity is still there. So it will be with our resurrected body, the identity will be there. If God is able to make all kinds of bodies—of men, animals, fish, birds, celestial bodies, terrestrial bodies, etc.; then, why can't He also make us a new body fit for our eternal abode! (1 Cor. 15:35-41).

The "Spirit of Life" in a New Body

Just as God placed within the physical body of Adam the "spirit or breath of life"; so, again, God will place our "spirit or breath of life" into our new body. This "new body" is described in various ways in 1 Cor. 15:42-44. Notice the terminology:

Verse 42—Sown in corruption—raised in incorruption.

- Verse 43—Sown in dishonor—raised in glory.
Verse 43—Sown in weakness—raised in power.
Verse 44—Sown a natural body—raised a "spirit" body.

The Apostle also says that we will bear the image of the heavenly Man (v. 49). He also makes it very clear that **"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"** (v. 50). So, we will have a new body that will clothe our spirit (soul). The Apostle states this new body is:

1. "a building from God" (2 Cor. 5:1)
2. "a house not made with hands" (v. 1)
3. "eternal in the heavens" (v. 1)

But what is this "spiritual body" like? (1 Cor. 15:44). One insight that we have been given is found in Phil. 3:21—**"Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body."** Our old body will be raised and transformed into an immortal, glorified, powerful body—fit for a spiritual existence with God forever.

Our Assurance of a Resurrection

We have recorded by inspiration of God the actual resurrection of those who had died. However, these were resurrected to a life that was still "mortal." They would die again.

1. 1 Kgs. 17:20-23—Elijah raised the Son of the Widow of Zarephath to life by the power of God.
2. 2 Kgs. 4:18-37—Elisha raised the Son of a Shunamite woman to life by the power of God.
3. 2 Kgs. 13:21—A dead man who was thrown into the grave of Elisha and touched his bones was raised back to life.
4. Luke 7:13-16—Jairus' daughter was raised by Jesus.
5. Luke 8:55—Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain.
6. John 11:23-44—Jesus raised Lazarus.
7. Matt. 27:52—Many "nameless saints" were raised by God after Jesus was raised. Jesus was the "first-fruits." (1 Cor. 15:20).
8. Acts 9:36-41—Peter raised Tabitha back to life.
9. Acts 20:9-12—Paul raised Eutychus back to life.

All of these were raised to live again, but in a world of sin, sorrow, tears, and pain; and then, to **die again!** But they clearly demonstrate the great power of God to give new life to our mortal bodies.

But the **resurrection of Jesus** is our greatest assurance of our coming resurrection. The Apostle Peter stated that Christians have been begotten again

to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3-4). And God has given to us ample evidence and proof of the Resurrection of Jesus!

1. The Old Testament prophesies of the coming Messiah that would be put to death, but raised up from the dead (Isaiah 53, Psalms 16, Acts 2:25-31).
2. Jesus, Himself, foretold of His coming death and resurrection (Matt. 16:21).
3. The empty tomb of Jesus furnished great proof to people then, as well as now.
4. The appearances of Jesus gave plenty of evidence to the ones who would preach His Message to mankind.
 - a) To the disciples upon different occasions (Acts 1:3).
 - b) To some women twice (John 20:11-18; Matt. 28:9).
 - c) To individuals—Peter, James, two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mk. 16:12; 1 Cor. 15:4-7).
 - d) To over 500 brethren at once (1 Cor. 15:6).
 - e) To Saul (Paul) last of all (1 Cor. 15:8).
5. Saul's (Paul's) changed life can only be explained by His belief in the resurrection of Jesus. After seeing Him, he turned immediately from being a Persecutor to being a Proclaimer!
6. The existence of the church through all of these centuries is evidence of a belief in the resurrection of Jesus.

Conclusion

Christ's resurrection and our resurrection are inseparably tied together. A denial of one is a denial of the other. A belief in one is a belief in the other. The evidence is there for us to believe in both. When we face death, this hope will give great assurance to us.

Consider these Scriptures: Heb. 2:7-9; 1 Cor. 6:3.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. God has ordained that all men will die, but not all men will die.
- ___ ___ 2. God has ordained that all men will be raised, but not all men will be raised.
- ___ ___ 3. There will not be a "rapture" of Christians.
- ___ ___ 4. There is more than one general resurrection of mankind.
- ___ ___ 5. Every grave yard will someday be empty of all human bodies.
- ___ ___ 6. It must be important for our "spirit" to be "clothed upon" in our next existence after death.
- ___ ___ 7. The seed of corn helps to illustrate the resurrection of our bodies.
- ___ ___ 8. Our "New" spirit will be placed in our "New" body in the day of the resurrection
- ___ ___ 9. A "spiritual body" is merely a "spirit" being clothed by a "spirit."
- ___ ___ 10. We do not know anything about Jesus' glorious body.
- ___ ___ 11. All the resurrections mentioned in the Bible were to show the power of God to raise up a dead person.
- ___ ___ 12. The resurrection of Jesus not only shows God's power, but to give us assurance of what our resurrection will be like.
- ___ ___ 13. There is no statement in the Old Testament about the Messiah being raised from the dead.
- ___ ___ 14. Paul's changed life serves as one of the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus.
- ___ ___ 15. The death of Jesus on the cross becomes meaningless if there is no resurrection.

Lesson Five

"The Surety of the Judgment"

An important question needs to be raised concerning the resurrection of all of mankind that we studied about in our previous lesson. *"If all are to be raised, then what advantage is there in being a Christian?"* I believe that this lesson will clearly answer this question. Notice that in both places where a general resurrection of **"both"** are mentioned, there is a clear-cut clue to why the resurrection is extremely important to the Christian....and obviously will not be important to the non-Christian.

"I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." (Acts 24:15). "The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." (Jn. 5:28-29) It is easy to see why the resurrection is so meaningful to the Christian—he is raised up unto eternal life. ***"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57).***

Who will be Judged?

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." (Rom. 14:10). The Apostle states in 2 Cor. 5:10 that all will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body, whether good or bad! The apostle warns in verse 11, ***"Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..." (2 Cor. 5).*** This clearly shows that both the good and the bad will be judged. But this raises another question: *"How do we know for sure that God will judge all mankind?"* We often judge people's words by their actions of the past! We are encouraged to do the same with God. He even inspired men to do so. Peter gives a list of past actions by God in this regard:

1. The punishment of the angels that sinned (2 Pet. 2:4)
2. The punishment of the world in Noah's day by a world-wide flood (2 Pet. 2:5).
3. The Punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Pet. 2:6)

Jude, the Lord's brother, did the same thing (Jude 1:5-11). One of the obvious reasons for recording the judgment of God upon the ungodly is to warn us today that God is true to His Word! The Hebrew writer, after listing examples, states: ***It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10:31)*** (Unprepared, that is!)

Why a Final Judgment?

It would seem to be quite obvious that mankind is already under judgment even while he is living on earth. He is either saved or lost, a child of God or not, right with God or in rebellion against God, etc. He has even punished people openly for their sins even here—before a Judgment Day! So, what is the point of a "Day of Judgment" where all mankind will be brought before the Lord?

When Jesus came to earth the first time, He stated: "***I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.***" (Jn. 12:47). Yet, many felt the sting of His words of warning about the punishment of God that would come on the disobedient and disbelieving (Matt. 23). Jesus judged the leaders of the Jewish people to be religious hypocrites. He ended this chapter with a strong, but sad, rebuke (and judgment) (v. 37-39). And yet, His primary reason for coming was to offer eternal life as a possibility for mankind. And on that basis, He came calling men to repentance.

But Jesus will come again, some day, and this time He will come to be the judge of all. All of the physical punishments that God brought upon sinful men were only partial—not complete! He wants us to learn from these physical judgments so that we will not receive the terrible final judgment of God some day (Matt. 16:27). Jesus' resurrection is an assurance that this judgment will come (Acts 17:31).

Facts About this Judgment

1. God will judge through Jesus (Heb. 12:23; Jn 5:22). Who better to judge than the God-Man?
2. It will be according to Righteous-ness (Rev. 20:12; Jn.12:48; Rom. 2:2). It will not be perverted, unfair, nor unreasonable.
3. It will be an awesome sight and experience for mankind. (Rom. 14:10-12). Every knee will bow before Him and every tongue will confess to the glory of God!

But back to our original question: "*Why a final Judgment Day?*" Three things would seem to be obvious to my mind. Make your own evaluation upon what you can see some Scriptures indicate. Please notice:

1. To help all men see themselves in the true light! Man has the power of memory even after death (Lk. 16:25). We retain a record of all our actions and thoughts, possibly. In judgment, God just has to revive it to our consciousness. It seems that our conscience voluntarily anticipates punishment for wrong deeds. It will amount to a self-revelation and a self-condemnation when our lives are compared to God's Truth.

Man's thoughts and deeds develop into the character of the person. Our character will reveal our past thoughts and actions. Our character will then be judged on the basis of God's Truth. Thus, man's true condition of his soul will be fully made manifest in judgment. (Matt. 15:19-20). God's justice will be made obvious to all. The righteous person will be upheld and the unrighteous person will be shown for what they really are.

2. To see that Justice is full carried out and complete. Not all wrongs are punished, even here on earth. And....not all right actions are recognized by others as they should be. God's justice will make all known and clear (Rom. 2:16).

3. To pronounce the Final verdict upon mankind! Men often misjudge others as well as themselves. It is usually because of hardness of heart, an impenitent heart, or a deceived heart that causes men to make wrong judgments—especially about themselves. (Rom. 2:5-6). There is only one who can give the full and final righteous judgment—God!

Conclusion

We are being judged every day by our thoughts and actions. We are even judging ourselves every day as well. Every honest person knows that he will be judged someday by God. Those who are not honest about this matter are only deceiving themselves. When the Apostle Paul preached to Felix (A Roman Governor in Palestine), the Scriptures recorded his reaction: *"as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid..."* (Acts 24:25). There was good reason for his fearfulness—he was not prepared for judgment and he knew it! What about our lives—are we prepared?

God gives us time here to turn to Him, listen to Him, believe in Him, become obedient to Him, and to live an obedient, faithful, and righteous life before Him. It is amazing that God will forgive us on such simple terms (Acts 2:38) as we begin our walk with Him; and, that he will continue to do so as we walk in the light of His Word (1 Jn. 1:7-10). God's mercy is amazing, wonderful, and inexhaustible NOW! But in the Day of Judgment, there will be no mercy—only justice!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. Since both the just and unjust will be raised some day, there seems to be no advantage of being a Christian.
- ___ ___ 2. There is no reason for the faithful Christian to be judged by God because he is under the grace of God.
- ___ ___ 3. It is right to judge people's words by their actions of the past.
- ___ ___ 4. The punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah is used as an example of God's Word being true.
- ___ ___ 5. There is no need of a final judgment since mankind is already judged as being saved or lost.
- ___ ___ 6. Jesus' first coming was for the purpose of saving mankind, but his second coming will be to judge mankind.
- ___ ___ 7. Jesus, during his public ministry, did not pronounce any judgment on anyone.
- ___ ___ 8. Jesus' resurrection is man's assurance of a Judgment Day.
- ___ ___ 9. God, the Father, will judge in the last Day.

- ___ ___ 10. Man, usually, does not really see himself as he is in the sight of God.
- ___ ___ 11. Man's character will be judged by God's truth.

- ___ ___ 12. Justice is very often not completely carried out in this world.
- ___ ___ 13. Man's messed-up heart is what causes him to make wrong judgments about himself.
- ___ ___ 14. We are being judged every day by our thoughts and actions.
- ___ ___ 15. God's mercy is always extending to men who will listen and believe His Word.

Lesson Six

"Reward and Punishment"

Is it reasonable or logical to believe in reward, but not punishment? Is it the lot of our existence to be like the beast around us who neither have fear nor hope in death? Is it just to live a short time and die with no hope of anything beyond this existence? In the words of Job: ***"If a man dies, shall he live again?"*** Our study thus far indicates strongly that there is hope for the person who will turn to God in faithful obedience and submission to His Will.

Why Believe in Reward?

1. Because of what Jesus has said! He came down from heaven to live among men (Jn. 1:1, 14). While here, He promised to have a place prepared for us someday when He returns (Jn. 14:1-2). If He has been there, He ought to know about it! He has given us insights to this place by using descriptive terms:

- a) Life without end in the presence of God (Matt. 25:46).
- b) A place of glory (2 Cor. 4:17).
- c) A place of Rest (Heb. 4:9; Rev. 14:13).
- d) A new world different from this one to exist in (2 Pet. 3:13).
- e) A place of great reward (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:8).

2. Because of conditions that have to be faced in this life.

- a) Our life here on earth is short (Jas. 4:14) and without the hope of heaven, it is all over in a very short time. Is that the purpose for our existence?
- b) There is also the wickedness that we have to deal with here on earth. The world became so wicked at one time that God had to destroy all but eight souls. Wickedness often reigns among mankind. Morals are continually lowered to the level of beast. Honesty and truth are compromised and laughed at. Man needs to have hope of something better than this (Matt. 5:10-12).
- c) Then, there are the trials and tribulations of life itself. Life, for many, is often filled with ***"Blood, Sweat, and Tears!"*** There is the struggle to survive (Matt. 6:33). There are the many temptations we have to deal with constantly throughout our lives (Jas. 1:2-4). Then, there are the calamities that often befall us sooner or later. Such calls to mind what Jesus said: ***"Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."*** What a blessing to have hope in such circumstances of life

3. Because of the blessings Heaven offers. The following passages of Scripture will give an indication of these:

- a) Rev. 21:5—"**Behold, I make all things new.**"
- b) 2 Pet. 3:13—"**...look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**"
- c) 1 Pet. 1:4—"**to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.**"
- d) 1 Cor. 15:42-44—Our raised bodies will be: Incorruptible, Glorified, Powerful, and prepared for our eternal existence with God.
- e) 1 Thess. 4:17—"**...always be with the Lord.**"

The desirability is seen in these terms: New, Unchanging, Complete holiness, Complete satisfaction. There will be no more pain, tears, death, persecution, crippling diseases, etc. Who wouldn't want to go to Heaven! The following passages give us encouragement as well:

Phil. 1:23—"**For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.**" Paul's choice was to either remain on earth and be of service to mankind or go on to his reward. He knew the second choice was far better for him.

1 Cor. 2:9—"**Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.**" It is believed that about the time Paul wrote these words he was given the opportunity to look at "Paradise!" Unfortunately, he was not allowed to tell us all about it....but he certainly wanted to go there!

Luke 6:23—"**Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven.**" Sounds pretty exciting to get to go there!

Why Believe in Punishment

- 1. Common sense says so!** Every society or nation punishes the Law-breaker! When proper officials will not punish, we resent them for not doing their job. When they punish the Law-abiding citizen, we again resent them. The very concept proves we all believe in proper punishment for wrongdoing. Granted, we also believe in degrees, depending upon the crime. But nevertheless, we believe in punishment, and even severe punishment. Rom. 13:1-5 admonishes us to be in subjection to governing bodies. They are not only ordained of God, but ordained to punish the wrong doer. But man is limited in his ability to punishment in comparison to God (Matt. 10:28).
- 2. Belief in God demands it!** Belief in God makes one aware that he must do right (Rom. 1:18-20, 32). If he does not, he is to be punished. Thus, on the basis of belief in God, man is called upon to repent or perish (Acts 17:29-31).

3. **Belief in Jesus demands it!** The Greek word "Gehenna" that is translated "Hell" occurs 12 times in the New Testament. It is the concept used to describe future punishment. Jesus used it eleven out of 12 times Himself. One cannot consistently believe in Jesus and not believe in "Hell." Even Jesus' death on the cross for man's redemption tells us clearly that future punishment (Hell) is real or why else did He die?
4. **Belief in a Judgment Day demands it!** Why have a Judgment Day, if there is no punishment? (Heb. 9:27) Why threaten people with Judgment, if there is no Hell? (2 Cor. 5:10-11). To believe in a Judgment Day is to believe in Hell!
5. **Belief in the Word of God demands it!** The Bible plainly teaches that there is a Hell! (Heb. 10:28-31). Jesus states that there is something worse than dying a physical death (Matt. 10:28).

Thus, we could conclude that to deny Hell is to also deny: Common Sense, God, Christ, Judgment, and the Word of God! If these things are so obvious, what is the problem with people not believing in Hell or Punishment?

Conclusion

The obvious choice for all of us is to believe in and want to go to Heaven! Why shouldn't everyone want to go there! But going to Heaven is not without a cost! And this is where the problem comes in—the willingness to pay the cost! The cost is spelled out clearly: ***"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."*** (Matt. 16:24). Jesus must become the Lord of my life—what He says, I must do! This is the reason why Jesus insisted: ***"Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."*** (Matt. 18:3).

Some feel that they can set their own cost for going to Heaven, but they are only deceiving themselves. Only God can and has set the price. It still stands! Are we willing to pay the cost?

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. Man can choose to be like the beast that has no fear in death nor hope of reward or punishment after death.
- ___ ___ 2. Any one can make the claims that Jesus made and get a following.
- ___ ___ 3. Jesus has an advantage over the rest of mankind for He has been in Heaven before He came to earth.
- ___ ___ 4. A good reason why we shouldn't have "heaven on earth" is that we would not see the need to go to Heaven after this life is over.
- ___ ___ 5. Wickedness on earth has nothing to do with our wanting to go to Heaven.
- ___ ___ 6. Trials and tribulations help to prepare us for Heaven.
- ___ ___ 7. Jesus calls people to follow Him because they have no real burdens to bear.
- ___ ___ 8. The Apostles looked upon themselves as "ambassadors" for Christ.
- ___ ___ 9. This present Heavens and Earth are to be renovated for our future existence.
- ___ ___ 10. The Bible does not say that our new body will be one of power.
- ___ ___ 11. Most people would prefer not to believe that God will punish man in Hell (as described in the Bible).
- ___ ___ 12. The Laws of men require punishment for breaking their Laws.
- ___ ___ 13. A belief in God logically demands a belief in punishment.
- ___ ___ 14. Jesus used the word "Gehenna" (Hell) all 12 times in the New Testament in His personal teaching on earth.
- ___ ___ 15. The death of Jesus on the Cross clearly shows that Hell is a reality.
- ___ ___ 16. There is no point to threatening people with judgment if there is no Hell.
- ___ ___ 17. Jesus plainly teaches that there is something worse than dying a physical death.
- ___ ___ 18. People do not want to believe in Hell because it is too terrible.
- ___ ___ 19. The length of punishment is not the real hindering point.
- ___ ___ 20. I could possibly believe in Hell if I knew I would not go there.

Lesson Seven

"The Need to Prepare for Death"

Jesus gives a brief case history of two people who lived on earth at one time in Luke 16:19-31. In spite of its being brief:

- a) The story is soul-stirring;
- b) It offers hope for mankind, but also great despair for others.
- c) It gives a promise of great blessings or terrible punishment.

When man dies the wise man states in Eccl. 12:7:

- a) That his body goes back to dust,
- b) But his spirit goes back to God who gave it.

The New Testament is more specific about the spirit of man. It goes into the place called Hades—the unseen abode of the dead—to either a place of comfort; or, a place of terrible torment. Jesus takes us into the realm of the unseen and gives a glimpse of what lies beyond death's door. But, He also gives three good reasons why a person should be making preparations for death.

1. BECAUSE THAT PUTTING OUR EMPHASIS ON THIS WORLD, RATHER THAN THE WORLD TO COME, ENDS IN ENDLESS PUNISHMENT. (Luke 16:19-21).

Jesus Describes the Rich man's condition while he lived.

- 1) He was clothed in purple & fine linen.
 - a) He wanted the best and had them.
 - b) He had the good things men seek for in this life.
- 2) He fared sumptuously every day.
 - a) He had no want of anything he desired to eat.
 - b) The best every day.
- 3) It does not describe him as a wicked person who:
 - a) Had killed people
 - b) Or, Robbed them.
 - c) But, his great sin was—selfish inhumanity.
 - d) Matt. 25:41-46
 - e) He was not really concerned about the needs of others about him.
- 4) But there was an underlying reason for his actions.
 - a) It was a worldly outlook.
 - b) He was not concerned about whether there was another world after this one.
 - c) He spent his time, energy & interest on things of this world.
 - d) He wanted all the enjoyments this world could bring.

Jesus then describes the Rich man's condition after death. (Luke 16:22-23).

- 1) As with all men—the Rich man died & left this world.
 - a) He closed his eyes to the gorgeous surroundings of earth.
 - b) And opened his eyes in Hades—finding himself in great torment.
- 2) The Rich man learned quickly:
 - a) That a worldly outlook brings torment after death.
 - b) That all of his riches, prestige, power on earth were of no help after death.
 - c) That failure to prepare for the next world brings severity of torment.

2. BECAUSE ALL HOPE OF MERCY IS GONE AFTER DEATH. (Luke 16:24-26)

Jesus describes the terribleness of his torment.

- 1) It was so terrible—he cried for mercy.
- 2) He just desired a little water to touch his tongue to ease the torment.
- 3) This is describing a “spirit being” enduring excruciating torment.
- 4) The Rich man discovered quickly that no mercy would be extended.

Abraham reminded him of his former condition on earth.

- 1) You had a lot of the good things.
- 2) But you saw no need of sharing it with those who had need.
- 3) Your interest was in getting all you could out of this world for yourself.
- 4) You had no interest in “laying up riches in heaven.”

Now, your condition is reversed!

- a) You are tormented.
- b) And there is no hope of release from this torment.
- c) A great gulf is fixed so that no one can help you.
- d) Matt. 25:46—“*And these will go away into everlasting punishment.....*”

3. BECAUSE THERE IS NO ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE FOR NOT PREPARING! (Luke 16:27-31)

Jesus describes his supposed concern for his 5 brothers still living.

- 1) With no hope for himself—he expresses concern for his 5 brethren.
 - a) Abraham, would you please send someone back to warn them not to come to this terrible place of torment.
 - b) If someone would go back from the dead—surely they would listen.

- 2) But Abraham reminded him:
 - a) They have Moses and the Prophets that are warning them.
 - b) If they will not listen to them—neither would they listen to one raised from the dead.
- 3) Shortly after this—this very event happened!
 - a) Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, who was the brother of Mary and Martha.
 - b) Did the Jewish people really believe?
 - c) Many of them wanted to kill Lazarus—because of the desirable effect upon some of the people.
 - d) This mighty wonder brought no change in these hard-hearted, worldly-minded people.
- 4) And then, shortly after this—the greatest event of all history happened.
 - a) Jesus was raised from the dead.
 - b) How many listened—How many changed their ways?

It is very possible that the Rich man was trying to excuse himself.

- 1) But Lord, if someone had come from this place and warned me—I would have listened!
- 2) His excuse—no one warned me!
- 3) And so it is—that the world goes on in its careless, selfish, thoughtless way.....
- 4) Paying no heed to the great warnings from one who rose from the dead.
- 5) Men allow their worldly outlook to overshadow their concern for preparing for death and what comes afterwards.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

What about us—are we listening to the warnings of God? Have we understood that there is an existence after death for all mankind. That in this unseen place—

- There is a separation between the worldly-minded....
- And the ones who listens to God.
- And once we have died—there is no opportunity to repent & be saved.
- That there is just endless punishment for those who will not listen.

When you and I close our eyes in death, What will be the next thing we will see in Hades: a place of comfort and bliss; or, a place of continual torment.

1. God gives us the choice of which place we want to go to.
 - a) To take heed & diligently prepare
 - b) Or, to ignore the warning.
4. Which have we chosen?

Questions for Discussion

1. Did Jesus tell the true, real-live story of two men or is it just a parable?
2. What happens to man's spirit upon death?
3. What does the New Testament teach about where the spirit of man goes upon death?
4. What happens to the person that puts his emphasis upon this world and not on the world to come?
5. What is a worldly outlook?
6. Why is the Rich man in torment?
7. Upon death, is there any hope or mercy to be extended to man?
8. What did Abraham have to say about the Rich man's request?
9. What does it mean, "*there is a great gulf in between?*"
10. What affect did the raising of Lazarus from the dead have on these people?

