Section: Doctrine of the Last Things and Eternity (Eschatology)

Lesson 90: Wednesday April 21, 2021

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q115. Beyond this life, are there other opportunities to be redeemed from guilt and reconciled to God?**

No. Beyond this one life, there are no additional chances to repent and trust in Jesus alone.

**Q116. What happens to people when they physically die?**

The bodies of those who have died return to dust and decay; however, their souls neither die nor sleep, because they have an immortal character. At death, the souls of the righteous are made perfect in holiness and are received into paradise, where they are with Christ and enjoy God’s glory while they wait for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are sent by God to Hades, where they remain in torment and utter darkness awaiting the final judgment.

*Introduction*

Tonight we venture into the study of last things. This area of theology is called eschatology. This word is derived from two Greek words, eschatos & logia (low-ya). Eschatos means last and logia (low-ya) is where we derive our English suffix ology (“all-low-G”). We see this suffix in words like theology, psychology, biology, etc. The suffix denotes a field of study. Theology is the study of theos. Theos is the Greek word for god. So theology is the study of God. So, literally, eschatology is the study of last things. It is the study of death, heaven, hell, judgement, etc.

Let’s go ahead and read our first question and answer: ***Q115. Beyond this life, are there other opportunities to be redeemed from guilt and reconciled to God?*** *No. Beyond this one life, there are no additional chances to repent and trust in Jesus alone.*

For us, this may seem like a fairly simple question and answer. Many of us have been raised to understand that we must repent and believe into Christ *in this life*. You’ve probably traditionally understood that once we are physically dead, we are unable to repent. This understanding is indeed Biblical and accurate.

Our catechism question presupposes a few things, so please allow me to build a foundation.

*Foundation*

We have earned guilt from our sin. This sin is imputed to us from Adam’s first transgression in the garden. Adam is our federal head; he is our human representative. Because of his headship and subsequent failure, we have fallen in him. We are also complicit in our sin as well. As we live, we all add to our guilt by sinning personally. No one is without excuse.

Romans 3:10-12 says, “As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

Because of Adam’s sin, we are separated from God. Our sin cannot co-exist with a perfect and holy God. Psalm 5:4 says, “For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you.”

For man to be reconciled to God, man must have his sin guilt removed.

Enter Jesus. We know the story of Jesus. We know that He is the spotless lamb who, being the God-man, was able to pay for our sin by His perfect obedience to God and able to be a perfect propitiatory sacrifice for our sin. We are literally forgiven and counted righteous by His good work and sacrifice applied to each of us according to God’s will.

*Repentance*

But, what must we do to enjoy these saving benefits? God commands all men everywhere to repent. We must repent and believe. However, as we know from a careful study of all scripture, we do not play the ultimate role in our salvation.

When we, His elect sheep, hear his voice, we see our sin and we see His radiance and we are enabled by God’s will in that moment by the gift of regeneration, then saving faith to repent of our sin and turn wholly to Christ. Repentance is the act of turning from our sin. This is the foundational act in which the believer turns from his sin and turns toward Christ. We understand that repentance and belief, while it is an act that we, the individual perform, is not a meritorious act that earns us salvation. It is gifted to us and empowered by God-alone in us.

*Can we repent after this life?*

If God commands us to repent, we must ask, “Can we repent after this life?” Scripture nowhere says that we are capable of making our lot better after death. It indeed says the opposite. Consider the following passage from the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 13:1 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Luke 13:2 And he (Jesus) answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? Luke 13:3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Luke 13:4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? Luke 13:5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

What’s the context here? Jesus is speaking to a crowd. Those in the crowd are telling Jesus how some Galileans had been slain by Pontius Pilate and his soldiers. Some Galileans had come to the feast of the Passover and were offering their sacrifices in the temple. When Pilate had killed them, their blood was mixed with the blood of the Passover lamb. The implication here being that the death by Pilate in such an egregious manner and their corresponding suffering was due to their worse-off sinful state.

But, what is Jesus’s response? He tells them that their sin-state did not earn them a worse death, but rather – Jesus levels the playing field. He says, “I tell you, but unless you (all) repent, you will all likewise perish.”

Jesus responds to their terrible event with another terrible event (the tower falling in Siloam) and indicates that all death is the right and just punishment of our sin against a holy and righteous God. Jesus commands them to repent twice in the span of 3 verses, indicating an urgency to his plea.

Jesus makes it clear. Unless you repent, you will perish. You – Pharisee. You – Galilean. You – American. Jesus’ meaning is clear. You are all condemned already, destined for physical and eternal spiritual death. You must turn from your sin!

The urgency of Christ’s command here is meant to drive us to repentance. We should not wait. We should repent, now.

But can we repent in the after death? Does a place of second chances even exist? Jesus’ teaching about Lazarus in Luke 16 indicates that the answer is a definitive NO – We cannot repent after death.

Luke 16:19 “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. Luke 16:20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, Luke 16:21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. Luke 16:22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side (Abraham’s Bosom / KVS). The rich man also died and was buried, Luke 16:23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. Luke 16:24 And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. Luke 16:26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ Luke 16:27 And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ Luke 16:29 But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ Luke 16:30 And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ Luke 16:31 He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

It's important to note here that at this point in history, Heaven and Hell were not places of human occupancy. All deceased humans went to what Scripture calls Sheol. And Sheol had two compartments, one for God’s elect and one for the reprobate. The first is called the blessed place in Sheol. This is referenced in our passage as “Abraham’s Side”, historically this has been called Abraham’s Bosom and/or Paradise. The second place meant for the reprobate is a place of suffering called Hades. Abraham’s bosom is now vacant as all who died prior to Christ’s ascension are now with Him in Heaven. It’s also important to note that Paradise can also be used to refer to Heaven and Abraham’s Bosom/the blessed place in Sheol. Keep that in mind as we study and consider tonight’s teaching.

But, setting aside this for a moment. If we look to what the parable teaches, we see that it confirms our catechism answer, there was no ability for the rich man to repent while in Hades.

The author of Hebrews makes our point crystal clear: Hebrews 9:27 “And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment”

When a person dies, there is an immediate judgment based on whether or not they have saving faith in their one life on this earth. That factor determines if God calls their soul to Himself or sends the person to punishment. Again, the text is didactic, “it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment”

The point is clear, God’s decree is irrevocable. Based on this, it should be clear. It is impossible for an unrepentant man, who is certainly judged at death and descended to punishment, to make his way to heaven.

*Purgatory*

But what about the Catholic teaching of purgatory? Is this a Biblical teaching?

First, let’s give a working definition of purgatory: In false Roman Catholic theology, Purgatory is an intermediate location after death where some of those ultimately destined for heaven must first undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter heaven.

The doctrine of purgatory assumes that some of whom God is saving are not fully justified and redeemed by the time they die.

What do we, as Reformed Baptists, as Christians, share in common with Roman Catholics here? We both agree that our sin cannot co-exist in the presence of God. We both agree that, in order for man to be in the presence of God, we must be without sin. We must be in a sinless state.

Protestants believe that Jesus cleanses believers from our sin. Roman Catholics claim to believe this as well, but in a different sense. There are significant differences here when comparing Reformed Protestant beliefs and Roman Catholic beliefs.

According to our theology, Jesus imputes to us His righteousness from Him living a perfect life, adhering to all of God’s moral and applicable positive law. He is the spotless lamb and who has sacrificed Himself for His sheep.

Now, we must understand core differences between our theology and the theology of Rome. Protestants believe, by and large, that Jesus provides the elect sinner an imputed righteousness that is sufficient and decisive and is credited by grace through faith. In other words, when God looks upon a regenerated and redeemed person, he does not see our transgressions, rather God sees the imputed perfect righteousness of Christ. Christ’s righteousness is credited to us; our transgressions are not held against us. That being the case, we are declared righteous by Christ at the moment of salvation. This is the Christian doctrine of *Justification by Faith Alone*.

Rome does not believe this. Indeed, the Roman soteriological view is that Christ’s saving grace is *somewhat* imputed to the individual through the *Sacrament of Baptism*.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, [and] are incorporated into the Church.”

Once the Roman Catholic congregant receives ‘Holy Baptism’, they believe they are cleansed and brought to a so-called morally neutral state. For the remainder of the life of the Roman Catholic, that individual must participate in works in order to be truly justified by God in the next life. The entire Roman Mass is designed to fortify the Roman believer. According to Roman Catholic doctrine, the priest performs an actual miracle (transubstantiation) in which he transforms the elements of bread and wine into the actual flesh of Christ and blood of Christ. This is called the Eucharist. Christ’s actual bodily flesh and blood are then re-offered as an additional propitiatory sacrifice for the Roman Catholic. They believe this enables the Catholic believer to gain more strength so that they may continue to perform good works.

Indeed, the historical Council of Trent, which dogmatically defined many Catholic doctrines said, “Holy Communion preserves the supernatural life of the soul by giving the communicant supernatural strength to resist temptation, and by weakening the power of concupiscence (lust). It reinforces the ability of our free will to withstand the assaults of the devil. In a formal definition, the Church calls Holy Communion “an antidote by which we are preserved from grievous sins” (Council of Trent, October 11, 1551).”

Indeed, here we see that the Roman Catholic is not fully justified, rather they must continue to receive the Eucharist, confess their sins and perform meritorious works in order to ultimately be saved. They believe that Christ enabled them to do this by the initiatory work of Holy Baptism.

To be very clear, Roman Catholicism is a damning doctrine of salvation by works. The Catholic assumes ability to perform the works through participation in the Eucharist. But, if certain severe sins beget the Roman Catholic, then they run the risk of losing their salvation.

To better understand the Roman Catholic views of Salvation, Justification and Purgatory - think of a cup. The cup is full of sin. Jesus empties the Catholic’s cup at Holy Baptism and thus it is up to the Catholic to then start to remove their additional/ongoing sin by emptying the cup themselves. If they get too much sin in their cup, then they will need the cup to be emptied in the next life, in purgatory. But if they perform really bad sins, then Christ may not save them at all and indeed they will be forsaken. As such Roman Catholics have no assurance of salvation.

There is no scriptural support for the false doctrine of purgatory. The main verse given as scriptural proof for purgatory is 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

1Cor 3:10-15 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

The Catholic church performs a category error in their exegesis of this passage. They misinterpret Paul’s use of fire as a means by which God will purify the sinner in purgatory. But, if you read the passage and understand it fully, you will see that Paul is speaking to church leaders and warning them to let their work of holding to truth stand firm.

This is not a reference to purification after death in purgatory, rather it is a reference to the earthly institution of the church. This is a warning to church leaders to not let distortion come into their doctrinal beliefs. He is warning them to not build upon his church foundation with wood, hay and straw. Think of modern churches that have thousands in attendance, but the gospel is not preached. These are the sorts of wood, hay and straw filled churches that will burn up in fire, and will not stand the true test of time.

Paul states that these distortions ***may*** not negate their salvation as church leaders, as each church leader is sinful and rightly has sinful shortcomings, but that the good work of holding to truth will become evident in future seasons of testing.

Charles Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher of the 19th century says of this passage:

[It is] Very easy to build up a church quickly. [It is] Very easy to make a great excitement in religion, and become very famous as a soul-winner. Very easy. But time tries everything. If there were no other fire than the mere fire of time, it would suffice to test a man’s work. And when a church crumbles away almost as soon as it is got together, when a church declines from the doctrines which it professed to hold, when the teaching of the eminent teacher is proved, after all, to have been fallacious and to have been erroneous in practical results, then what he has built comes to nothing! Oh! dear friends, [in] what little we do, we ought to aspire to do [it] for eternity. If you shall never lay the brush to the canvas but once, make an indelible stroke with it. If only one work of sort, shall come from the statuary’s workshop, let it be something that will live all down the ages.

But we are in such a mighty hurry: we make a lot of things that die with us ephemeral — results [last for a very short time]. We are not careful enough as to what we build with. May God grant that this truth may sink into our minds. Let us remember that, if it is hard building with gold and silver, and harder still building with precious stones, yet what is built will stand the fire. It is easy building with wood, and easier still with hay and stubble, but then there will be only a handful of ashes left of a whole lifework, if we build with these.

There is no such thing as Purgatory, there is no such thing as salvation after death. There is no second chance.

*Conclusion*

After speaking about believers living after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension going directly to the blessed presence of God and unbelievers going directly to punishment in darkness, the 1689 Baptist confession of faith says, “besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture [acknowledges] none.”

Hebrews 9:27 again reminds us “… it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” Upon that immediate first judgment a human living in our time goes to Heaven or goes to punishment. That immediate first judgment is the perfect unchanging God declaring how the human will spend eternity; in the blessed presence of the Lord or in eternal punishment.

Therefore, we stand with Christian history and affirm, as our answer says, “Beyond this one life, there are no additional chances to repent and trust in Jesus alone.” As 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.” What we did when in our body, for this is the one life that we have before death, is what we will give an account for because it is the only chance to be reconciled to Jesus.

Finally*,* To the unrepentant: It is imperative that you repent and that you do so immediately.

And to the Church: We are commanded to go and share the gospel for this reason, that those who hear this Word would turn from their sin and look to Christ before it is too late.

Let’s now turn to our second question. Our second question tonight deals with the reality of what actually happens when we die. Our first question stressed the importance of repentance in this life, but this question deals with our destination once we die.

Let’s go ahead and read our question:

**Q116. What happens to people when they physically die?**

The bodies of those who have died return to dust and decay; however, their souls neither die nor sleep, because they have an immortal character. At death, the souls of the righteous are made perfect in holiness and are received into paradise, where they are with Christ and enjoy God’s glory while they wait for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are sent by God to Hades, where they remain in torment and utter darkness awaiting the final judgment.

The first point to mention is that we, as humans, have both physical bodies and spiritual souls.

The catechism answer again says:

1. ***The bodies of those who have died return to dust and decay; however, their souls neither die nor sleep, because they have an immortal character.***

Scripture supports this: **Genesis 3:19** “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

**Acts 13:36** For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption

That corruption is speaking of his body. To say it in terms of our catechism answer, David’s body “return[ed] to dust and decay.”

John Gill says of this part of this verse, “his body putrefied in the grave, became the repast of worms, and was reduced to rottenness and dust.”

As we see here in Acts and Genesis, at death our bodies return to dust as they decay and rot. The bodies of believers and unbelievers litter the Earth. As Christians, we are not guaranteed any such protection from the elements after death. But while our earthly bodies will decay and return to dust, according to scripture, our soul is immortal.

God made the human soul to be immortal. God made it that way. God made it that a human never ceases to exist. The question is, “Where and how will we exist?”

We persist for a time in our earthly bodies but we all will continue on in everlasting consciousness, even after bodily death.

**Ecclesiastes 12:7** and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

One of the wonderful realities for believers, and not so wonderful realities for those who are unbelievers, is that while our bodies will eventually die and return to dust, our soul will not. As we discussed already in this lesson, each person (upon their bodily death) is immediately judged by God—that’s what “the spirit returns to God who gave it” is getting at. The great Judge awaits all who die and meets them to declare to them their personal destiny. We see in scripture the promise of eternal life for those who believed in Christ alone before their death and eternal destruction for those who did not repent in this life.

After death, humans do not enter a state of unconsciousness. No, every person is consciously judged and sent to consciously exist somewhere. So, where will us who trust in Christ go?

Let’s look to the next portion of our catechism answer:

1. ***At death, the souls of the righteous are then made perfect in holiness and are received into paradise, where they are with Christ and enjoy God’s glory while they wait for the full redemption of their bodies.***

*I want to focus on 3 parts here.*

* *Let’s look at the first part of this statement, “at death, the souls of the righteous are then made perfect in holiness and received into paradise”*

The first thing to note here is that the elect will be with the ascended Christ in Heaven immediately upon bodily death. We will be only as souls waiting for eventual resurrection in our new bodies, nonetheless, **we will be** with Christ.

In order to be with Christ in this way, we must be ***made perfect***. At salvation, we are not *made* righteous, but rather we are *declared* righteous. At salvation, we are *cloaked* with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. As you all know, as we go on living in this broken world in our broken flesh, we are far from personally perfect. No fallen man is without sin. But, THANK GOD we don’t remain like that forever! Upon the death of our human bodies, our souls are *then made* perfect by Christ.

We see this in Hebrews 12:23. Here, the author of Hebrews, is speaking to the elect about Godly discipline that we must endure as Christians, and in passing, mentions God’s elect and the spirits of the elect, who are made perfect by Christ.

**Heb 12:23** and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven [the elect], and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.

* *Secondly, let’s look at the next part of this clause: “where they are with Christ and enjoy God’s glory”*

When we die, God’s elect will be with Christ at death. To illustrate this, let’s look to the story of the thief on the cross. Prior to his death, he cried out to Jesus, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” This man, given the gift of faith by God, had called on our Lord Jesus in that moment of death.

Jesus said to him in Luke 23:43: “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Jesus wasn’t referring to where their earthly bodies would lay. The thief’s body would have most likely been thrown in a burn pile and Jesus’ body put in a tomb. He wasn’t saying that the thief would hang out with him in the tomb, this is absurd. Jesus is making a more intimate and eschatological statement. He, the thief, now redeemed from the guilt of sin, would be with Christ. The redeemed thief wouldn’t be in his physical body, but rather would exist as a fully conscious soul. *The thief would be with Christ, in fellowship, that night. That redeemed thief went where Jesus went. And, that redeemed thief, (as well as all the other saints from Old Testament times,) were, days later, brought up to Heaven by Jesus.*

Now that Jesus is currently residing in Heaven, so too will each of us believers upon our death. Not only will we be in Heaven with Christ while we wait for the full redemption of our bodies, but to be with Christ in Heaven should be understood as an immediate gain to our joy and happiness. This is the Apostle Paul’s dilemma in Phil 1:23:

Phil 1:23 I am hard pressed between the two [life and death]. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

Paul understood that at death, though he would not have his resurrected body, he would be with Christ in spirit.

He says this point elsewhere in 2 Corinthians 5:8, “Yes, we are of good courage, and **we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord**.”

Additionally, as we will see in upcoming lessons, Heaven, as it is now, is not our eternal home. Saints who have died now exist in the current Heaven as spirit apart from their bodies. God will one day make a new heaven and a new earth; we will live on the new earth.

*Bodily Resurrection*

* *The third part of this portion says, “while they wait for the full redemption of their bodies.”*

The point here is that the souls of the elect who have experienced a bodily death are *with Christ* in Heaven waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. Scripture testifies of the truth of bodily resurrection for the saints. Let’s look at this in a bit more detail.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

In an unknown moment, the bodies of the redeemed will be raised, and made new to be glorious, imperishable bodies.

It’s important to note that resurrection will be a resurrection of both the just and unjust, but with very different outcomes. We see this in John 5:28-29.

John 5:28-29 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Those who are just, will have made-new bodies that are characterized by strength and glory. Paul states this in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44: 1Cor 15:42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 1Cor 15:43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 1Cor 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

We, the elect, will have imperishable, made-new bodies, raised in glory. Raised in power! This will be quite different for those who refused to repent, but nonetheless, they will be raised. But, if we die prior to Christ’s return to this earth, while we are in heaven, prior to the bodily resurrection, we will be waiting to be reunited with our bodies and see them transformed by God to be imperishable, glorious bodies.

Finally, let’s look at the 3rd clause in our answer:

1. ***The souls of the wicked are sent by God to Hades, where they remain in torment and utter darkness awaiting the final judgment.***

*Hades / Hell & Final Judgment*

There is a place of punishment that exists now, commonly referred to as “Hades” in Scripture. This place, in one sense, is Hell-like. (And some even refer to current Hades as “Hell.”) But the final, most terrible, place of punishment is yet to be experienced by the wicked. It is the eternal lake of fire. This is the final and everlasting Hell.

But, at this time, before the fullness of Hell is brought to be, the souls of the reprobate (the unbelieving ones—the wicked) are in “Hades” where they are most certainly being punished by God.

**Luke 16:22-23** ...The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment...

Currently, both the reprobate humans and the fallen angels, are in a punishment place, a Hell-like place, where they await final judgment:

**Jude 6** And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.

After our bodily resurrection comes final judgment. We will all, both elect and reprobate, stand before God in final judgment. What is final judgment? We talked earlier about an immediate judgment….our focus now is the final judgment.

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him sitting on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And a place was not found for them. And I saw the dead, the small and the great, stand before God. And books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead in it. And death and hell delivered up the dead in them. And each one of them was judged according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. And if anyone was not found having been written in the Book of Life, he was cast into the Lake of Fire” (Revelation 20:11-15).

Those of us who trust in Christ, who are his elect, we will plead the blood of Christ and His righteousness credited to us. Because of His work for us, we will be spared and brought to the new heavens and new earth with our glorified bodies.

Those of humanity who have neglected to trust in Christ, whose names are not written in the Book of Life, will be judged by their works, guilty with sin, and eventually cast into the Lake of Fire, the eternal Hell.

***Application***

Now for a bit of application.

First, to the believers listening to this, let us understand that “beyond this one life, there are no additional chances to repent and trust in Jesus alone,” and take that biblical truth to our hearts to cause us to be dedicated to proclaiming the gospel to the world, to those God has put in our path, and making disciples. The gospel is the only hope for anyone in this life. With these things being true, let’s go out and be diligent in this for God’s glory and others good! Our neighbors have no hope without the gospel.

Second, if there are any unbelievers amongst us here, do not wait to repent. Do not consider these things tonight, and simply go home, and remain in unbelief and rejection of Christ.

Do not consider what I’ve said and flee to God as a means for treasure. God is not our genie who grants us temporal wishes. Instead, consider what I’ve said as a means to be reconciled with God. Consider the riches that Christ offers his church.

For the saved, in our heavenly bodies, He will purify us, He will strengthen us, He will give us Him! We will finally be as we were created to be, sinless and in perfect fellowship with the Triune God and glorified fellow man.

We desire to know and be known. Praise God that He has made a way, through Christ, for us to be known and loved by the King of kings for all of eternity.

Let’s pray.