

LESSON 3: WHERE AM I GOING?

You have been made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). This means that you are a dual-natured being during your earthly life, with both a physical and spiritual existence. However, the Scriptures clearly teach that the physical aspect of your existence is only temporary (like a tent you will put off, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10). So, a true God-centered perspective of life will require that you embrace this temporary nature of your physical existence and understand what is waiting after your earthly life ends.

ECCLESIASTES 12:1-8

It can be easy to lose sight that you (and all people) will go the way of all the earth (Joshua 23:14; 1 Kings 2:2) and get caught up in everything earth offers. However, this passage reminds you to remember your Creator even in the time of your youth. For, there are difficult days ahead as time on this earth winds on. This passage poetically pictures the aging process that results in increasing challenges during life. For example, the following are suggestions of what the images may portray. The arms and hands become weak (the guardians of the house tremble). The legs and back bend and bow (the strong men stoop). The teeth break off and fall out (the women who grind grain cease because they are few). The eyes dim and sight becomes more challenging (the ones who watch through the windows see dimly). The ears hear dimly (the doors at the street are shut while the sound of the mill fades). Sleep becomes more difficult (one rises at the sound of a bird). The voice becomes weak (daughters of song grow faint). Fears are heightened due to increased risk (afraid of heights and dangers on the road). The hair turns white (the almond tree blossoms). Movement becomes challenging (the grasshopper loses its spring). Desire is lost (perhaps sexual desire; the caper berry has no effect). Then, if you live long

enough to go through all this, you will go to your eternal home and people will mourn your death. This is pictured by the silver cord being snapped, the jar being shattered at the spring, the wheel being broken into the well, and the dust returning to the earth from which it had come (Genesis 2:7; 3:19)! Yet, your spirit/soul will continue and pass into God's hands! Therefore, recognize that no matter who you are and what your circumstances of life are, this is what is waiting for you on this earth, ultimately leading up to your death (Hebrews 9:27)!

LUKE 16:19-26

The spirit lives on after death in a place called Hades (the realm of the dead). However, what you will experience at this time will depend on the kind of life you had lived (Galatians 6:7-8). Some will experience the comfort of paradise in Hades (like Lazarus). Others will experience the torment in fire (like the rich man). Wherever you find yourself in this spiritual realm of departed spirits after your death, you will not be able to change it, as there is a great chasm between the two. Therefore, your only opportunity to impact what you will experience after your death is how you live during your earthly life!

MATTHEW 25:31-46

Hades is not your eternal home. It is where you will go if you die before Jesus comes back. Then, when Jesus comes (at an unknown time, Matthew 24:36-39, 42-44), the dead will rise (John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:11-15) and the living will meet the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:50-58). You will then stand before Jesus's throne in Judgment and answer for the way you lived on earth (Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 4:13; Romans 14:10-12). You will receive one of two possible judgments at this time. Either you will have been faithful and pleasing to God and be welcomed into the kingdom prepared by God, or you will have been evil and unfaithful to God and sentenced to depart from God to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Therefore, you will go away into one of these two possible eternities (never-ending time) –

either eternal punishment or eternal life, based on how you lived on earth.

MARK 9:43-48

One option for where you spend eternity is called "Hell." The word translated "Hell" referred to a burning garbage dump in a valley south of Jerusalem. So, the picture is one of great destruction and fire. Except, unlike the physical valley, the place Jesus talked about has fire that will never end. Therefore, it is depicted as never-ending punishment in a place that is engulfed in fire (Revelation 21:8). In fact, Jesus depicts Hell as being so bad that you should do anything and everything within your ability not to go there (pictured as being worse than cutting off your hand or foot, and gouging out your eye)! Then, worst of all, Hell is a place of eternal separation from God (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 21:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

1 PETER 1:3-4

There is another option for eternity besides Hell. Those who have found forgiveness of their sins through Jesus and live faithfully in service to Him have an eternal home reserved for them in Heaven. This is presented as an inheritance from God that never ends or loses its value. Elsewhere, it is seen as a place with no pain, suffering, death, or evil (Revelation 21:4, 27) and described as a beautiful place beyond all human comprehension (Revelation 21:10-26). Then, best of all, it is a place where you can forever be with God (Revelation 21:22-27; 22:1-5)!

CONCLUSION

You are currently living as a dual-natured being (a spiritual being living in a physical body). Yet, your physical existence is only temporary, and you will die. When this happens, your spirit will live on. Ultimately, you will either spend eternity in Heaven or Hell. Therefore, the way you live while you are on this earth in your physical body matters, as it will determine what you will experience throughout eternity! Only the perspective of your physical life that focuses on where your spirit will spend eternity is the true perspective you must develop.

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

Why is it important to remember your Creator, even in the time of your youth?

How does God portray the aging process?

What will happen at the end of the aging process (if not before)?

What happens to the soul after death?

What will happen when Jesus returns?

What are the possible outcomes you can be given in the final Judgment?

What will Hell be like?

What will Heaven be like?

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