

## Lesson Seven – Heaven vs. Hell

*Day One – Heaven is God's Domain*

*Day Two – The Heavenly Calling*

*Day Three – Gehenna*

*Day Four – Sheol/Hades*

*Day Five – The Abyss and the Lake of Fire*

We have spent many weeks studying the fundamental building blocks of Christian doctrine: time and eternity, life and death, salvation and destruction. While we have just begun to touch the surface of these subjects, these subjects are indeed at the very heart of our Christian faith. I again encourage you to be diligent in searching the Scriptures to make sure that your foundations are in place, so that when you continue your studies you will be building *truth* upon *truth*. Only then can you truly stand firm. For as David wrote –

### **Psalm 11:3**

**If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?**

This week we will explore what is perhaps the most crucial, yet basic concept of all Christianity – the understanding of the dwelling places for man when he/she leaves this earth, either by the passing of the physical body or the future intervention by the Lord Himself. The most common Christian belief is that Heaven is the place where all Christians will immediately go, that Heaven is currently the residence of God on His throne, with Jesus at His right hand. Moreover, most believe that when each and every Christian physically passes on, their spirit and/or soul (for there are varying degrees of belief concerning how many parts there are to man) go to Heaven to be with Jesus and God, thus beginning *eternity* for each individual Christian.

Additionally, most Christians believe that the opposing dwelling place of Heaven is Hell, and when all *non*-Christians physically pass on from this earth, their spirit/soul ends up in Hell, where (most believe) Satan dwells.

Again the question we should be asking is, *Is this scriptural?*

To begin this week's study we must again review. Please do not tire of this step! We must build upon what we have already learned. So far we have learned about the construct of time as it pertains to *this age*;

an age that will last 6,000 years. We learned that Satan is currently the god and ruler of this age, and he rules the earth from the heavens with his fallen angels. This, however, is all occurring within God's Supreme Rule as nothing happens outside of His Sovereignty. We also learned that there is an age that is coming. This coming age will follow directly after this present age and will last 1,000 years; this coming age is the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. This coming age is also known as the Seventh Day, the Day of the Lord. The fullness of "time" is seen in the construct of 7,000 years as set forth in the beginning pages of Scripture in the account of God's restorative work of the heavens and the earth; He takes 6 days of work to bring about restoration for His fallen creation, followed by a 7<sup>th</sup> day of rest. *This is the way God structured His Word in order to represent His ways of restoration.* Therefore, as we study all fundamental doctrines of Christianity we must see how everything fits within this structure.

The concept of life and death, as seen within this structure, is simple. Man consists of three parts – spirit, soul, and body. When man is born he is born *dead* (death simply means *separation*). All three parts of man are separated from God due to the one transgression of Adam that was then passed on to all mankind (save One – Jesus the Christ). Man therefore needs *life* for all three parts; he needs to be *saved from death*. Since man is in this fallen state during this age, he is currently not achieving his created purpose, which is to rule. *Man needs life* (fellowship with God) *and salvation in order to rule*. This process will take six "days," or six 1,000-year periods, culminating in a final Day of Rest. (These seven days end just prior to the beginning of the ages of eternity.)

Man first receives spiritual life through faith in God's provision of a substitutionary sacrifice of death and shed blood. The ultimate, perfect sacrifice is Jesus Christ. This initial giving of life pertains to man's spirit, and once given *it remains throughout all the ages to come*. Subsequent to receiving spiritual life, man must then choose to forfeit his soul/life in this age in order to receive his soul/life in the age to come (which is viewed *as a reward*). He must also, during his Christian life, receive the provision given for the cleansing and forgiving of sins, which is the shed blood of Christ currently on the Mercy Seat in the heavens, where Jesus is acting as High Priest and ministering on behalf of His people. If the Christian practices this life of faithful obedience, *by following the Spirit and allowing God to restore him*, he will be justified at the Judgment Seat of Christ and receive the salvation of his soul. Along with the salvation of his soul he will receive the salvation/redemption of his body – a body that will be covered in glory as is needed to fully be in the image and likeness of God. This subsequent life and salvation pertains to the kingdom age and is given as a reward for working out your salvation (i.e. *overcoming*). Life and salvation pertaining to the kingdom age is a separate process from the life and salvation that pertains to the ages of eternity future.

Many saved individuals *will not* receive the salvation of their soul and corresponding body of glory and *will not* rule during the coming age, the Seventh Day. However, this person *still has life that pertains to the spirit* – presently, and for all the ages to come (eternity future).

At the end of the 7,000 years of time, we see the institution of a new heavens and a new earth wherein time *as we know it* ceases. The throne of God combines with the throne of the Lamb and we see God's dwelling place switch from the upper recesses of the north *to the new earth* (cf. I Cor. 15:23-25; Rev. 21:1-5). From that point onward we are given but a glimpse in the Scriptures as to what will transpire, that saved mankind will rule with the Godhead throughout the entire universe, throughout the ages of ages.

As we are learning, the focus of the Scriptures is on the Seven Days.

So let's begin!

## Day One – Heaven is God’s Domain

Please pray before you begin to study today. As we near the home stretch it is important that you stay alert and diligent, not only in your studies but also in your prayers. It would be good to continue to pray for wisdom and understanding.

As we have done with the other Lessons, let’s start building a picture, *line upon line, one piece at a time*. First, we will need to understand the current administration of God, as well as the physical (invisible and visible) structure of the heavens and the earth.

Let’s take a look at some Scriptures that will help us view this more accurately. You’ll remember that we just looked at these passages in Day Two of Lesson Six –

**Colossians 1:16-17, 19-20**

**16 For by Him [Jesus] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.**

**19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.**

All things were created by Jesus and *for Jesus*. But due to Satan’s sin, and due to man’s subsequent sin, certain positions of authority *fell into ruin* (you’ll recall this from Lesson Two), and therefore have need of reconciliation. The blood that was shed at the cross made reconciliation of *all* these things possible. What things are mentioned in v. 16? And where are these things located (vv. 16 and 20)?

The focus of reconciliation is on the *invisible and visible positions of authority in the heavens and on the earth*. We have already learned that there are dark and wicked forces in the heavens, ruling over the earth (Satan and his angels), but we also know that God is in “Heaven” ruling over everything –

**Matthew 5:34-35**

**34 "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet...**

What/Where is the throne of God?

This next verse will help put another piece in place –

**II Corinthians 12:2-5**

**I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a man was caught up to the third heaven. 3**

**And I know how such a man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows – 4 was caught up into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. 5 On behalf of such a man will I boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses.**

In this letter written by Paul he is referencing *himself* when he says he knows “a man” who was caught up to the *third* heaven and heard “inexpressible words” that he “is not permitted to speak.” Paul is somewhat “boasting” (v. 5) of this vision/experience because the Church at Corinth was exhibiting a passive interest in his obvious authority from the Lord. In other words, Paul is telling the Church that he actually went up to “the third heaven” and heard from God Himself.

So we can actually see that God resides in the *third* heaven, and Satan and his angels currently reside in *the* heavens (this would be referencing the invisible positions of authority). But the word “heavens” is used in another sense as well, in relation to something visible –

**Genesis 1:20**

**Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens."**

The problem with our current understanding of heaven lies in the fact that we have somehow limited the word to just *one* place, that being the proper noun, *Heaven*. But Scripture doesn't use the word so narrowly. The word “heaven” is used in many different ways, with its definition determined by its context. Unfortunately, if you were to look up the word “heaven” in the Strong's lexicon, you would find some misleading information (much in the same way as the word “eternal”). Again, the definitions are *man-made* definitions; the definitions are *not* inspired. Sometimes they are scripturally accurate, sometimes they aren't. Therefore it is crucial to set context of scriptural passages wherein these types of words are used.

Here are just a few additional verses to help in our understanding. Read the following verses and then take a look at the chart that follows on the next page.

**Psalms 103:19**

**The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; and His sovereignty rules over all.**

**Isaiah 14:13-14**

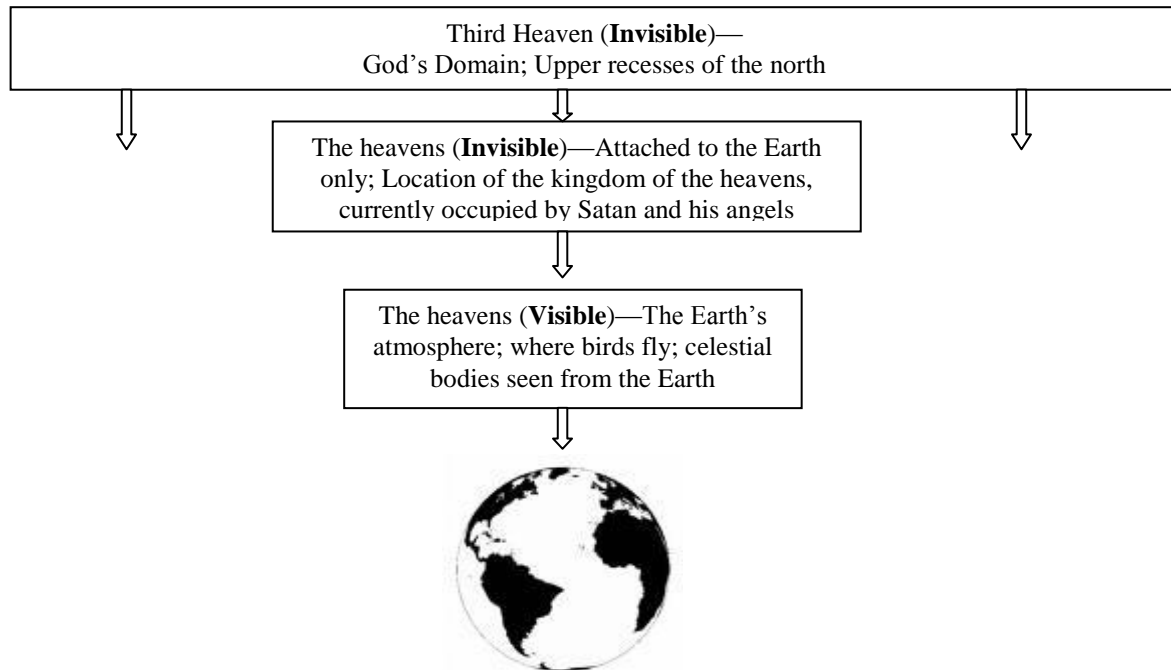
**13"But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. 14 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'"**

**Ephesians 6:12**

**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

**Psalms 8:3**

**When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained...**



Psalms 103:19, II Corinthians 12:2, and Isaiah 14:13 correspond with the top box of the chart; Ephesians 6:12 with the middle box of the chart; Genesis 1:20b and Psalms 8:3 with the bottom box. All of this is seen in relation to *above* the earth (ground).

(Please make sure you understand this before continuing with this Lesson.)

Let's now take a closer look at the structure of the *administration* of the heavens and the earth within God's universal kingdom. Remember, just as the Scriptures are focused around a Seven-Day structure of *time* as it pertains to man, so are the Scriptures focused on the *places* which concern mankind – the earth and the heavens immediately surrounding it.

Let's take a look at the following passages from the Book of Daniel –

**Daniel 10:1-21**

**1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Beltshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision. 2 In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. 3 I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all, until the entire three weeks were completed.**

How long does this say that Daniel mourned?

Continuing –

**4 And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. 6 His body also was like**

**beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.**

Describe the “man” that Daniel encounters.

Continuing –

**7 Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. 8 So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deadly pallor, and I retained no strength. 9 But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. 10 Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 And he said to me, “O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.**

**12 Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.**

Why did this “man” come?

From where did he come? (This is not directly stated, but inferred.)

Continuing –

**13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.”**

Again referencing v. 2, how long did Daniel mourn? And according to v. 13, how long was this “man” delayed from coming to Daniel?

Who was withstanding him and whom had he been “left there with”?

Who came to help him?

What is Michael called?

It is important to note that the words “prince” and “king” indicate *positions of authority*. Therefore, context dictates whether what is being spoken of is a man or an angel (e.g. Satan is called the “king” of Tyre in Ezek. 28:12, and the “prince” of the power of the air in Eph. 2:2).

Continuing in Daniel chapter 10 –

**15 And when he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16 And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, and said to him who was standing before me, “O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me.” 18 Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. 19 And he said, “O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!” Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, “May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.”**

**20 Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. 21 However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.”**

Verse 20 states that the man/messenger will “return to fight against the prince of Persia.” To where will he return?

What are the forces being referred to in v.21?

Who is the only one standing firmly with this “man” against these forces?

The messenger, with help from Michael the Archangel and Guardian of Israel (cf. Dan. 12:1; Jude 1:9), was fighting with the prince of Persia and the kings of Persia in the *heavenly realm*. Meanwhile Cyrus, the earthly king of Persia, was ruling a rather large and powerful kingdom of Persia (which was actually a dual kingdom, the Medo-Persian kingdom, but Persia was the stronger of the two at this point). In v. 20 the messenger states that “the prince of Greece is about to come,” and historically we know that Greece became the next world power, under the leadership of Alexander the Great, after conquering the Persians and the Medes.

So we see that there are angels waging war with other angels in the invisible *heavenly realm*. Their titles, “prince of Persia,” “prince of Greece,” and “kings of Persia” historically coincide with the earthly kingdoms in power. Satan is the leader of them all; his angels are directly under his authority. And this rule governs *in* and *from* the heavens above the earth, *over* and *on* the earth. However, remember that Satan’s rule does not and cannot take place outside the sovereign control of the Almighty God.

We can see this succinctly stated in the following passage from Daniel –

**Daniel 4:24-26**

**“...24 this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king [Nebuchadnezzar]: 25 that you be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes. 26 And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules [Lit., *the heavens* do rule]...”**

What does the second half of v. 25 say about the Most High?

What is said at the end of v. 26?

God is the ruler of the realm of mankind but *He bestows this rulership on whomever He wishes*. Also, “the heavens do rule.” This shows us a picture of rulership emanating *downward* through a hierarchy of rulers whom God chooses, from the third heaven where God dwells to the heavenly realm where the angels dwell, down to the earth where man and beast dwell. And as we glimpsed through Daniel’s experience, there is a battle going on in the heavenlies between the fallen, rebellious angels under Satan’s rule and those angels still faithful to God’s bidding, having as its focus God’s redeemed people who are striving after the kingdom. And though it is invisible to us, we should nonetheless believe that it is as real as anything we can physically touch and encounter.

This idea we’ve been taught about “Heaven” is not so simple, is it?

See you tomorrow.

## Day Two – The Heavenly Calling

As we begin to study today please pray carefully for understanding regarding the things that you are learning. It's no small matter that we have encountered such confusion regarding the terms *heaven* and *hell*, for the enemy of our soul would much rather have us stay confused and deceived rather than understand our true calling –

**Hebrews 3:1**

**Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.**

Just as Israel had an earthly calling immediately subsequent to being redeemed out of slavery, so the Church, the holy brethren, has a *heavenly calling*. Just as Israel, this is a calling *beyond* our initial salvation/justification. Since we have seen that the term “heavens” refers to several different domains, exactly which of the three heavens would our “heavenly calling” be referring to?

I hope that you answered “the invisible heavens, where Satan and his angels currently dwell” (or words to that effect)! The implications contained within that phrase should be getting clearer and clearer to you at this point, and because it is so crucial to understand exactly what our heavenly calling is, we will be spending the rest of today's study time reviewing this term. Let's begin by answering a few (easy!) questions –

What is man's created purpose?

What will man be ruling over?

Who is currently ruling that domain?

What Day does Scripture focus on?

What will be occurring during this Day?

Does this have anything to do with forever and ever?

Since man cannot take part in this in his currently incomplete state, what needs to occur concerning all three parts of man's being? (Answer this question by using some of the terminology we have been studying the past few weeks.)

Scripture teaches us that Satan is currently ruling over this earth from the heavenly realm. Scripture also teaches us that he will *not* be ruling during the coming Seventh Day because his throne, which is *in the heavens*, will be taken from him by the rightful King, Jesus the Christ. This change of power (so to speak) will transpire immediately prior to the Seventh Day (after the six days of work has been accomplished). Jesus will not be ruling alone that Seventh Day for He will have a host of co-heirs ruling with Him *in the heavens* – those who have received the salvation of the soul (*life in the age to come*) by making the proper choices during *this* life, *this* present age. It will be those of the Church who have carried their own cross, died to their flesh, lost their soul *now* who will receive life, salvation, and rulership in the age to come.

*It is the clear teaching of Scripture that not every member of the body of Christ will take part in that coming age.* And even though that may be very hard for some of us to hear, it is true nonetheless. As we have studied, life and salvation are an individual's choice. Here is just a sampling of what the Scriptures teach –

**Matthew 7:21-23**

**"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"**

**Ephesians 5:5**

**For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**

**Revelation 2:26-27**

**26 And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27 AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father...**

**Revelation 3:19-21**

**19** Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. **20** Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. **21** He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

**1Corinthians 6:9-10**

**9** Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, **10** nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Generally, what do these passages say about the coming kingdom?

In particular, what does 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 say about the kingdom of God?

Did you notice the key term “inherit”? This may bring to mind a verse that we studied a few weeks back that gave us a treasure of information –

**Matthew 19:29**

**And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mothers or children or farms for My name’s sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal [age-lasting] life.**

This verse is found after the interchange between Jesus and the man we know of as the rich, young ruler, when Jesus’ disciples questioned Him concerning the dialogue. We studied this on Day Five of Lesson Two and found some very important synonymous terms throughout the passage. Please go back to that section now and review what you learned from that day. We will then finish today’s study time by tying all of these terms together so that we can be absolutely sure that we know exactly what Scripture is talking about in reference to our *heavenly calling*. Please do that reading now.

Okay, now that you’ve refreshed your memory of that section of Scripture, let’s review some of the key phrases. Receiving eternal (age-lasting) life, entering into life, being perfect/complete, entering the kingdom of heaven/God, being saved (*future tense*) and receiving a reward concerning rulership are all used interchangeably. Add in the last verse we just looked at and we’ll see that *inheriting* eternal (age-lasting) life is synonymous as well. Let’s make some more comparisons –

**Colossians 3:24**

**...knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.**

What is the reward?

And –

**Matthew 5:12**

**"Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."**

Where is the reward?

And –

**1Peter 1:4**

**...to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

What does Peter say is in heaven for us?

And –

**Ephesians 5:5**

**For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**

Where is the inheritance (i.e. *the reward*, which is reserved in heaven)?

And –

**Luke 18:18**

**And a certain ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal [Lit. age-lasting] life?"**

**I Corinthians 6:10**

**...nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.**

What do we *inherit*?

And –

**Revelation 22:12**

**"Behold, I [Jesus] am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."**

When, and with Whom, is this reward coming?

What is the reward "according to"?

When does Jesus set up His kingdom?

Do you see how all of this is tied together? It is all pointing to, talking about, referencing, and focusing on *the coming Seventh Day in which all of these things will be realized.*

So in closing, what "heaven" should we Christians be focused on? What is our heavenly calling?

See you tomorrow.

## Day Three – Gehenna

Now that we have clearly seen that *not all Christians* will receive the inheritance in the coming kingdom of Christ on that Seventh Day, we must of necessity ask the question regarding the fate of the Christian who *does not* enter into life in the age to come. If during that Seventh Day the *overcoming* (i.e. the faithfully obedient) Christians will be ruling from the heavens, then what happens to the *non-overcoming* Christian during that time?

At this point I would like to make something abundantly clear. We serve a God of mercy and compassion. We belong to a Father who loves us mightily and loves us in a way that is beyond human comprehension; He provides for us ample abundance and blessing, everything that is necessary to be victorious. Our Father loves us so much that He sent His Son to the earth in a body of flesh, died in a most horrific way, and in a real sense, *He shed His own blood* in order to bring salvation and life and forgiveness to us – His creation.

We also serve a God of justice. We serve a God of perfection and righteousness in Whom there is no flaw, no sin, no deviance, no lies, *no evil whatsoever*. God will achieve that which He has set out to do and He will do it perfectly. He will not fail. We serve a God of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. Everything He does and says and wills and plans is perfect.

Having said that, we may very well not like what we read in the Scriptures sometimes. We may find ourselves full of fear concerning what we read in the Scriptures sometimes. *That's okay*. But when that happens, remember that God will not fail in what He has set out to do, nor will He abandon us or leave us. Should we stray from the course and find ourselves in a place of disobedience or unrepentance, it is *we* who have left God. He has not left us. And not only has He seen fit to give us everything that we would need for life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3), He saw fit to warn us of the consequences regarding our choices – both good and bad (cf. Lev. 26; Deut. 28). So if we at any time decide that God's way is too hard or too narrow, we must remember that it is not our plans that God needs to fit into – we must fit into His.

So now, as we take a look at what Jesus said during His earthly ministry regarding entrance into the kingdom of heaven, we must take His words personally and individually. Jesus spoke to His own people, those with spiritual eyes and ears and He spoke Truth. Unfortunately, those who should have heard and should have heeded chose not to. We, Church, are in that same position now, with spiritual eyes and ears, with the capacity to hear Truth. Let us please hear.

Most Christians believe that “Hell” is the final destination for all of the unsaved people throughout time, and that it is also the final dwelling place for Satan and his angels. *It is not*. Hell, as we will see throughout the remainder of this study, is a word that the English translators have used (most indiscriminately) to translate more than three *different* Greek and Hebrew words throughout the Scriptures. These transliterated words are *Gehenna*, *Hades*, *Sheol*, *Tartarus*, and sometimes *the Lake of Fire* (although not all translators use the word “hell” for all of these terms). It is absolutely necessary to set context each time one of these terms is used.

Let's take a look at what Jesus spoke during His earthly ministry –

**Matthew 18:9**

(Jesus speaking) "**And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell** [Lit., *Gehenna*, 1067].

What are the two scenarios that Jesus is contrasting?

This same conversation is recorded in a slightly different way in the Gospel of Mark –

**Mark 9:47**

(Jesus speaking) "**And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell** [Lit., *Gehenna*, 1067].

Again we see a contrast. What are the two alternate scenarios presented here?

The word “hell” in these verses is the Greek word *Gehenna*, Strong’s #1067. Look up the definition in the Lexicon located in your Appendix and write it down below.

Do you see a discrepancy here? The Strong’s definition has defined Gehenna as the place of *everlasting* punishment. But notice that Jesus used the term Gehenna in contrast with entering life/entering the kingdom, which we know is realized on that Seventh Day and not eternity. The kingdom of Christ lasts 1,000 years, still within time as we know it. So then, is Gehenna everlasting? Or is it age-lasting?

Let’s look at this a bit further by paying particular attention to what Jesus said specifically to the Pharisees and scribes of the nation of Israel. The scribes and Pharisees were the leaders of the people, the very ones who were in the position to teach God’s people all things concerning the Word of God and obedience to it. They were to teach truth, not only by the Word but by their actions as well. It is a clear rebuke by Jesus that they were not doing what they were supposed to do as shepherds of God’s people; in fact, they were doing quite the opposite. Let’s read what He said to them –

**Matthew 23:13, 15**

**13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in."**

**15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell [*Gehenna*] as yourselves."**

According to v. 13, what were the scribes and Pharisees shutting off from men?

Were they, the leaders, going to go in?

Because of the leaders’ actions, were those *who were to enter the kingdom* going to go in?

And because of them shutting off the kingdom of heaven from the men of Israel (as well as the proselytes, who were converts to Judaism) who were entering, what does Jesus call both the leaders and the followers (v. 15b)?

We can see from the Scriptures that the *picture* of being “cast into Gehenna” is contextually used in juxtaposition to entering the kingdom of heaven. *Both scenarios* are set within the context of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens; on the one hand we see a person who overcomes *entering into life*, and on the other hand we see the one who is disobedient *being “cast in Gehenna.”*

Another interesting detail concerning Gehenna is given in the following verse –

**Matthew 10:28**

[Jesus speaking] **And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy [622] both soul and body in hell [Gehenna, 1067].**

According to this verse, what two parts of man can be destroyed by God in Gehenna?

Which part of man is noticeably absent here? Why do you think that would be?

Remember that the word “destroyed” does not mean to cause something to cease to exist. We studied this word in Day Four of Lesson Six. If necessary, please review that section now in order to refresh your memory concerning the definition of destroy.

Implicit in Jesus’ statement in Matthew 10:28 is that the spirit of man *will not be cast into Gehenna*, nor will it be destroyed. In perfect keeping with what we have learned regarding the justification of man’s spirit, and the life imparted to the spirit upon initial faith, we see that the spirit is once and forever more given life and fellowship with God unto the ages. BUT, should such a person find that they did not receive life and salvation for the age to come – that which pertains to the soul and body – such a one would find themselves, soul and body, cast away from, *separated from*, God for a thousand years and *separated within themselves* (spirit vs. soul and body).

Now before we go any further as to *the location* of Gehenna, we’ll need to remember to see something quite particular to the word’s usage. While the Strong’s definition was inaccurate in the general definition of Gehenna, it is accurate in its description of Gehenna as being the same place as the Valley of the son of Hinnom, a particular city described in the Hebrew texts of the Old Testament. A description of this place is found in the following verses –

**II Chronicles 28:3**

**Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.**

**Jeremiah 7:31**

**And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.**

What particular aspect of this city is prominent in these verses?

The Valley of Hinnom was a *garbage dump*, located just to the south of the city of Jerusalem. And because it was a garbage dump, it was continuously *on fire* in order to consume all of the garbage. In other words,

the image presented is that Gehenna (a.k.a. the Valley of Hinnom) was *a fiery place* located *outside of the city*. It is *this particular place* that Jesus is using **as a figure of speech, for an example**, in His accounts as He speaks about the alternative to entering the kingdom of heaven.

And since this description of Gehenna is given only briefly, as an example, we are left with only a couple of details concerning it. Gehenna is fiery; Gehenna is outside of the city; and Gehenna is unpleasant. And implicit in our understanding concerning it, *so much so* that it almost doesn't need to be said, is that we should seek to avert being cast there for the duration of one thousand years. Instead we should focus on that which God expects us to focus, and that is –

**Matthew 6:33**  
**But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness...**

**II Peter 1:3**  
**...seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.**

See you tomorrow.

## Day Four—Sheol/Hades

So far we have seen that the *overcoming* Christian inherits the kingdom of the heavens on the Seventh Day. The *non-overcoming* Christian is figuratively pictured as being *cast in Gehenna* on that same Day. *Remember that this pertains to the Seventh Day only.*<sup>15</sup>

Since we have been dealing with individuals who have received initial justification/salvation of the spirit, we need to ask some necessary questions. If I die *today*, being a Christian with a redeemed spirit, where do I go? If the salvation of the soul and body remains to be determined at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and this particular Judgment takes place just prior to the Seventh Day, where do *I* go when my body dies? My body clearly goes into the ground, so where do my spirit and soul go? Any thoughts before we find the answer?

Remember Lesson One, Day Five when we studied about the events subsequent to Jesus' death on the cross? Review pages 20 and 21 of that Lesson now, and then fill in the blanks below.

Jesus' body went into the \_\_\_\_\_. His spirit went to \_\_\_\_\_. His soul went into \_\_\_\_\_.

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<sup>15</sup> Remember, when the Seventh Day ends, a new age of endless ages begins. And when the Seventh Day ends and time *as we know it* ceases, the dwelling place of God will be with men, *on the new earth*, as His throne and the Lamb's throne become one (cf. I Cor. 15:24-25). 5). The New Jerusalem will descend from the heavens to the new earth (cf. Rev. 21), and at this point, *because man was created to rule and God's plans are perfect*, all of *saved* mankind will indeed rule with God unto all the ages beyond.

This threefold separation continued until Jesus' soul and Jesus' spirit re-entered Jesus' body at the time He was raised from the dead. So what do you think happens to Christians when our bodies die?

Two words sometimes translated as "hell" are *Hades* (Greek) and *Sheol* (Hebrew), and both refer to the same place. This place being spoken of is *not* hell as most people understand the term, which is to say a fiery pit where Satan and his fallen angels are cast, as well as all lost individuals. It is not a place of punishment nor is it a place of eternal judgment. It is much more benign and Scripture describes it as such. (We saw that Jesus' soul went into Hades upon His death [cf. Acts 2:30-31]. Obviously if Jesus' soul went there, and stayed there for the interim of the three days, Hades is not an evil place of punishment.)

Hades/Sheol is simply the place of departed *souls* – souls that no longer have a body to dwell in. A "holding place," if you will, for souls awaiting judgment. Let's view some Scriptures that talk about it –

**Genesis 37:35**

[Isaac's son Jacob speaking] **Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, "Surely I will go down to Sheol [07585] in mourning for my son." So his father wept for him.**

**Job 7:9**

[Job speaking of physical death] **When a cloud vanishes, it is gone, so he who goes down to Sheol [07585] does not come up.**

**Matthew 11:23**

**And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to Hades [86]; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.**

In what direction is Sheol (Greek *Hades*)?

Let's take a look at how Sheol is used in context –

**Psalms 116:1-5**

**1 I love the LORD, because He hears My voice and my supplications. 2 Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live. 3 The cords of death encompassed me, and the terrors of Sheol came upon me; I found distress and sorrow. 4 Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I beseech Thee, save my life!"**

**Psalms 18:1-6**

**1 (For the choir director. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said,)**

**"I love Thee, O LORD, my strength." 2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.**

**4 The cords of death encompassed me, and the torrents of ungodliness terrified me. 5 The cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me. 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears.**

Rewrite Psalm 18, vv. 4-6.

David is clearly presenting a contrast in these two Scripture passages, through which we can see a definition emerge. Sheol is used in relation to death *in a physical sense*, contrasted with the saving of the physical life. David is talking about his fears of actual, physical death from the hands of Saul and he cried to the Lord for deliverance from that. As David praises the Lord for being saved from his enemies, he talks about the fear of the grave – *the fear of Sheol*. Sheol is viewed in an almost synonymous way as death. Sheol is the place of the dead, with no distinction made between saved and unsaved within the Word itself.

Let's take a look at what Paul says in the following passage –

**I Corinthians 15:12-14**

**12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.**

What is the topic that Paul is speaking about to the Church at Corinth (v. 13)?

This resurrection of the dead that Paul is speaking about is the simple fact concerning those who once existed in a physical body on this earth – those who then physically died – coming back to life in the same physical body. In other words, man does not cease to exist. And according to Paul, Christ is our example of this.

Continuing in I Corinthians –

**15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. 20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.**

According to vv. 17 and 18, if Christ hasn't been raised, then what has happened to those who have already "fallen asleep" (died)?

And since Christ was raised from the dead, have any of those who have fallen asleep perished?

What does v. 20 imply will happen to those who have fallen asleep?

Continuing further on in I Corinthians 15 –

**...50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 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. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.**

Within the topic of the resurrection of the dead, what is Paul's specific focus (v. 50)?

Continuing—

**54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. 55 "O DEATH [2288], WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH [86, Hades], WHERE IS YOUR STING?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Verse 54 is the climax of the subject that Paul is speaking about. He states that when the perishable (the earthly body) puts on the imperishable (the resurrected body) and the mortal becomes immortal, then the victory Christ won *for us* over *physical* death will come about.

Look up the following words in the Lexicon located in your Appendix and write down the definitions:

1. Death (2288)-
2. Death (86)-

Using the definitions above, rewrite v. 55 in your own words.

Because those who die physically (i.e. “fall asleep”) will be raised up again – their physical, earthly, mortal body will become imperishable and immortal – death and Hades have no more sting or power. Hades, the place that holds the dead, will be defeated.

Other than the use of Sheol/Hades as being the place of the dead, Scripture has very little to say about it. This should not be viewed as unusual, for Scripture has little to say about man’s existence between death and resurrection. Also, Scripture has little to say about what happens to man after the Seventh Day. What we see time and time again is that God’s focus within His Word is on the placement of man in the position of rulership on that Seventh Day. *That is the focus.*

## Day Five—The Abyss and The Lake of Fire

Well, this is it! You made it – good job! This is our last day together and it has been an absolute privilege and blessing to bring you this study. I have no doubt that you have learned much, but I am also quite sure that you have more questions that have not been answered. That is precisely what should happen and I encourage you to continue your studies and be diligent in your searching and praying.

Today we will be taking a brief look at the “abyss” and the “lake of fire.”<sup>16</sup> The Lake of Fire is probably most in line with Christianity’s idea of hell, though interestingly enough you won’t find it translated into that English word in any of the English Bibles.

Let’s begin by looking at events that will occur during the last days of this age –

### **Revelation 19:20**

**And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.**

This verse from the Book of Revelation is speaking about the beast (who is Antichrist) and the false prophet who performs signs in the Antichrist’s presence in order to deceive the nations (particularly the nation of Israel). The beast and his prophet are prominent characters during this time yet future, a time we know of as the Tribulation, which is the seven-year period immediately preceding the return of Christ to the earth and the establishment of His kingdom.

Context leading up to Revelation 19:20 shows the return of Christ to the earth in order to bring swift judgment and recompense to those who remain. He returns in victory having wrested the throne and crowns from the devil and his angels, and in this verse we are witnessing His judgment to His primary opponents, preceding the establishment of His Millennial Kingdom.

Where are the beast and the false prophet thrown?

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<sup>16</sup> There is one other Greek word that is translated into “hell” in English, and that is *Tartarus*. It is only mentioned once in the Scriptures and we will not be studying it together this week. I have attached some information on the subject in the Appendix that is quite useful and I encourage you to find some time to read it.

How is the Lake of Fire described?

There are another couple of details to view in Chapter twenty of the Book of Revelation, but again we need to see the timing presented therein. After the beast and false prophet are thrown into the Lake of Fire, Jesus then turns His attention to Satan –

**Revelation 20:1**

**1 And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.**

Where is Satan thrown, and for how long?

Notice that Satan will be released from *the abyss* at the end of the thousand years. The abyss is neither Sheol/Hades nor Gehenna nor the Lake of Fire. It is mentioned in a few other places, but not much information is given concerning it, other than who it will hold and its general location –

**Romans 10:6-7**

**But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), 7 or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS [12]?'"**

Where is the general direction of the abyss (also translated as “bottomless pit”)?

The bottomless pit is a separate and distinct place from the Lake of Fire. It is after the thousand years when Satan is loosed for a little while that he is then dealt with permanently –

**Revelation 20:10**

**And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

At this point, who is thrown into the Lake of Fire?

There is a further description given of what will occur in the Lake of Fire. What will happen to the devil, the beast, and the false prophet?

Then a few verses later we read this –

**Revelation 20:14**  
**And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.**

What else is thrown into the Lake of Fire (after the thousand years, *check context*)?

There is one other group of people sent into the Lake of Fire, and we see this recorded in the verse that follows the one we just looked at –

**Revelation 20:15**  
**And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

But in order to understand who this group is that is being spoken of, we need to jump back a few verses. Read the following passage concerning that time period immediately preceding the establishment of the kingdom when Jesus is determining who will be reigning with Him. This account is describing one group of people who had *not* worshipped Antichrist and/or were beheaded for not following Antichrist, but stayed faithful to Christ. These individuals are resurrected, brought to life, and given a reward of rulership. Then note in particular v. 5.

**Revelations 20:4-5**  
**4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed...**

Rewrite v. 5.

Who are “the rest of the dead”? They are the ones that were *not* resurrected prior to the coming age because they were *in no way eligible* to be judged in relation to that coming age. In other words, this is the group of people that we know of as the *unsaved*, those who never passed out of the death that they were born into. They never received life and salvation in relation to their spirit. And because of this lack of spiritual comprehension they cannot be judged on any works done in faith, for they never possessed any faith to begin with. They cannot be judged in relation to receiving the reward of the kingdom. And because of this, this group of people remains in Hades until after the Seventh Day has ended. After the Seven Days they are then resurrected to stand before the Great White Throne.

**Revelation 20:11-15**  
**11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and**

**death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one [of them] according to their deeds. 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.**

**15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

This group would fall into the category of *not* having their name written in the Book of Life, for they possess no spiritual life – they refused it at every turn. At this Judgment it is made abundantly clear to them what they have refused to receive and Whom they have refused to believe. And at this point when judgment is passed, this group of the spiritually dead is thrown into the Lake of Fire, where Satan and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, and death and Hades reside.

And because of what the future will bring us, because of all the things that we have been studying, it is with utmost seriousness that we must approach the topics of heaven and hell, salvation and destruction, life and death, and time and eternity. We should not be learning these things simply to increase the capacity of knowledge within our minds. We should not be learning these things in order to esteem ourselves above those around us. We need to learn these things in order to *live* these things and have the very thoughts and words of God transform us into the image of His Son. If we can attain to these things then we will no doubt be the light on the hill, the salt of the earth, and the messengers of the good news that God commands us to be. And if we can give an account of the hope that is within us then we may be able to be the vessel that God uses to show life to those who are dead, and life to those who are perishing. And not only that, He can use the implanted word to save our souls (James 1:21).

And if we receive the salvation of our soul in that future day, we will receive the redemption of our body and we will be found complete at the coming of our Lord and Savior, our Judge and King. And if we are found complete, we will hear those magnificent words spoken directly to us, “Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17).

It is a choice. I pray that we make the right one. *Daily.*

Keep studying!