

ReGroup 3/26/23

Eternity: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Over these past few months, we've taken an amazing tour across the spectrum of God's Eternal Plans. This lesson will be focused on recapping all that we've covered and also allowing for any blind spots to be noted and discussed. Within each section of our review, share any questions you may have and as a group see if you can arrive at some clarity. If there are any outstanding questions, keep them in mind and we will discuss them as a larger group in the weeks to come.

Our approach will be to return to each topic we've addressed so far, highlighting some key corresponding texts, and posing a few questions to consider...

From a Fallen World to a New Creation

Back in our first lesson we sought to understand the nature of the Fall and how it exactly impacted Creation. The most important takeaway is that we understand how sin severed our world's connection with God and His Spirit World. We've learned that one day our world will be restored and Heaven and Earth will be one again, with both realities literally merging into one. It's also important that we keep in mind how the Fall happened and how the Restoration takes place.

The New Testament reiterates this one message more than any other, how Christ came to reverse the curse and turn right-side up all of creation. While we wait for the full and final resurrection and restoration, we know that in Christ, we can wait with hope and a taste of what's to come.

Jesus introduces us to the New Creation and leads us in a "*As It Is In Heaven*" lifestyle. While things are not as they will be, through Him we can make strides through the Holy Spirit.

Some key verses to consider:

- **Romans 5:17** and **1 Corinthians 15:22** - Adam brought us into sin and separated us from God, but Jesus brings God's presence to us once again, and begins leading us towards our Eternal Restoration.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** and **Colossians 1:19-23** - The New Creation previews the Eternal Future. While we wait for Creation to be filled with God's presence once again, we ourselves can receive His Spirit and see our lives transformed.

- **Matthew 6:9-10** and **Romans 6:4** - Thus we pray for things to be done “on earth as *it is* in heaven”. Until Heaven comes to earth, we can counter the Fall with Resurrection Living.

Do you see how Christ and His redeeming work countered the Fall and the sin of Adam? Do you understand how Creation was originally meant to be and how things unraveled from there, and can only be restored through Jesus?

What other questions do you have regarding this overall framework for how creation is and where creation is heading?

Though We May Die

Not only are we fallen in sin, but our bodies became mortal because of sin. Originally meant to live forever, our flesh became corruptible because of our separation from God’s presence and sin’s infiltration of our creation.

However, we learned that death does not retain its victory over those who are in Christ. In Him, we can look forward to both a Spiritual renewal and a physical resurrection for our lives, so that we might experience Eternity as God always intended.

Some key verses to remember:

- **Romans 8:11** - Even in our flesh, Christ’s victory over death provides us spiritual salvation.
- **John 11:25-26** - Though we will face the effects of death all throughout our lives, and though we will in fact die one day, we have hope of Eternal Life in Christ
- **1 Corinthians 15:50-57** - We shall be changed inside and out when Christ translates us from this life to the next

Does death lose its power in your mind when you consider the work of Christ? Do you see death as merely a pass-way unto Eternal Life?

What questions about death and implications might you still have?

Heaven and Hell

We learned how when this life is over, there are two possible destinations for all of us. While there are differences between Heaven and Hell now with what they will look in Eternity, the basic ideas and promises are the same. Heaven is where life will finally be as it was always meant to be, while Hell is a place of judgement for those who fail to obtain salvation through Christ.

When we die, we will go to our Father's House and be in the presence of God and our fellow believers. Jesus talks about how a great reunion awaits all of us when we pass from this life, but He points towards much more regarding Eternity. Meanwhile, those who die apart from Christ, will enter into the darkness and torment of Hell. They face a future judgment before God and placement into the Lake of Fire for all Eternity

Some texts that punctuate the promise of Heaven and stress the reality of Hell:

- **Matthew 20:1-16** - God's invitation is based entirely on grace. We will all be given a personal invitation and the only requirement is that we cling to Jesus and serve Him *with our whole heart*.
- **Matthew 24:36-51** - No matter what point in life we begin following Jesus, it will be obvious from that point on that we have move all of our chips towards Him. Nothing else will rival His call to life and our faithfulness to Him will make clear where our affections lie.
- **Matthew 25:1-13** - Those who reject Christ or fail to turn to Christ, will face an Eternity in Hell. Once the door is shut, it remains closed forever.

Are the realities of Heaven and Hell clear to you? Are the pathways to either destination equally as clear?

What questions do you have about Heaven and Hell, from the paths that lead there to the quality of life we will experience there?

Angels, Demons, and More

We spent our most recent studies on how we intersect with the realities of Heaven and Hell every day, through the ministry of angels and mischief of demons. **With these subjects fresh on our minds, what questions do you have about either of these, or any other things adjacent to this series' discussion?**

Record any questions you still have below: