

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE DIE?

Part 1: Orientation

"Can you find out the deep things of God?

Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?

It is higher than heaven—what can you do?

Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?" (Zophar the Naamathite, Job 11:7-8)

...therefore, let's not hesitate to say to some questions, "I don't know." There are "secret things" that "belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever" (Deut 29:29) that we might have hope, and "in this hope we are saved," even as we hope "for what we do not see" and "wait for it with patience" (Rom 8:24-25).

Our September itinerary:

- ◆ **September 2:** orientation
- ◆ September 9: where are those who have died?
- ◆ September 16: the linchpin of resurrection
- ◆ September 23: what can we know about heaven and hell?
- ◆ September 30: your questions (ask via jason.hardin@gmail.com or 614-286-6288)

Orienting ourselves:

- ◆ You are dust (Gen 2:7; 3:19; Psa 103:14).
- ◆ We "share in flesh and blood" (Heb 2:14).
- ◆ But you are more than flesh and blood.
 - Paul referenced the "whole spirit and soul and body" (1 Thes 5:23).
 - Jesus warned his disciples, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matt 10:28).
 - In Mark 12:29-30, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4-5, calling it the "most important" commandment "of all": "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."
 - In 1 Corinthians 7:34, Paul emphasized the importance of being holy "in body and spirit."
- ◆ I have an "outer self" and an "inner self" (2 Cor 4:16)—a body, but also a "soul" that can "bless the LORD" (Psa 103:1), a "spirit" which "is in" me (1 Cor 2:11).

Of frailty, aging, and death:

- ◆ The body "apart from the spirit" is "dead" (James 2:26).
- ◆ Ecclesiastes 12:1-7 poetically describes the "wasting away" of our "outer selves" and the "return" of our spirits "to God" who "gave" them.
- ◆ In 2 Corinthians 5:1-4, Paul describes our "mortal" bodies as "tents" that can be "destroyed," but also the "longing" of disciples "to put on our heavenly dwelling."
- ◆ Psalm 116:15 goes so far as to say, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."
- ◆ Throughout the New Testament, those who have experienced the separation of their spirits from their bodies are described as having "fallen asleep" (Matt 27:52; John 11:11-14; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Cor 15:6, 18, 20; 1 Thes 4:14-15; 2 Pet 3:4).

Our most serious problem:

- ◆ "By a man came death... in Adam all die..." (1 Cor 15:21-22).
- ◆ Our iniquities make "a separation" between us and God (Isa 59:1-2).
- ◆ "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23).
- ◆ The devil has (or had) "the power of death" and has wielded it to instill "fear of death," subjecting image-bearers of God "to lifelong slavery" (Heb 2:14-15).

Our hope in Christ:

- ◆ Of first importance: "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3).
- ◆ "If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (1 Cor 15:12). "In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (15:20).
- ◆ In Revelation 1:17-18, the glorified Son of God tells John: "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades."
- ◆ Romans 8 focuses our attention beyond death to the hope that children of God have as "fellow heirs with Christ."
 - "The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (8:18).
 - "The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (8:19).
 - Death is not "able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8:38-39).
- ◆ Disciples of Jesus are called to live with a perspective that looks beyond "the things that are seen" to "the things that are unseen"—"an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Cor 4:16-18).

Notes: