**Life Beyond the Grave**

God wants us to know that He loves us very much and does not want anyone sent to eternity in hell. That is why He gave His only Son, Jesus—who died for us so that our sins could be forgiven and we could enjoy eternal life with Him in heaven. But we must recognize that heaven and hell are real places, and that God has given us the freedom and responsibility in this life to choose for ourselves where we want to spend eternity.

**Is Hell a Real Place?**

There are two descriptions of hell in the Bible. One is of a burning fire. Jesus often used the word gehenna to describe hell. Gehenna was the refuse dump outside Jerusalem that was always on fire. Jesus said hell was a place of worms, maggots, fire, and trouble. From that we get the image of a lake of fire and the concept of perpetual burning. The evil ones there are full of remorse and torment (see Mark 9:43-48).

Jesus also said that hell would be “outer darkness.” He said that some in His day will be cast into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12, see also Matthew 22:13). Here the image is one of terrible loneliness. Those who are consigned to hell will be put out into the inky blackness of eternity, with nobody to turn to, nobody to talk to, and they will be completely alone. They will suffer the remorse of knowing they had the opportunity to come into heaven with God, but turned it down.

The Bible speaks of a lake of fire reserved for the devil and his angels (see Matthew 25:41). Human beings were never intended to go into hell. But the ones who choose to reject God will one day follow Satan right into hell.

There will be no exit from hell, no way out, no second chance. That is why it is so important in this life to receive the pardon that God extends to all men through the cross of Jesus Christ.

**What Is Heaven Like?**

Heaven is where God is. He is the light of heaven, the joy of heaven. As you mature in your understanding of the Bible, you realize there is no material concept of heaven that will do it justice. The Bible talks about streets of gold as clear as crystal and walls made out of precious stones (see Revelation 21:18-21). All sorts of images immediately come to mind when we mention heaven. More than anything else, heaven is a spiritual realm where one spiritual being is in touch with another spiritual being, and there is total communication and fellowship.

Whatever we consider to be the joy here on earth will be heightened millions of times beyond anything we can conceive when we get to heaven. The apostle Paul put it this way: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV).

In the Middle Ages philosophers talked about the “ultimate good.” The ultimate good to them was being in the presence of God. That will be the greatest aspect of heaven. Those who are there will be in His immediate presence, in a way no one can possibly know this side of eternity.

Being in God’s presence will bring an intensity of delight that will far exceed anything we could know here on earth. Furthermore, in heaven there will be neither death, nor sorrow, nor sickness, nor poverty. He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people.

God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:4-5 NKJV).

The Bible also talks about crowns and thrones in heaven, so we do know that heaven is not just a huge democracy where there is no differentiation of function (see Revelation 4:4-11). There will be different functions and different levels of responsibility assigned to different people. For there will still be levels of order and structure throughout God’s universe.

The Bible also tells us that the ones who are fortunate enough to enter into heaven will actually be God’s messenger-agents in ordering and running it. They will be God’s agents in creating the worlds to come (see 1 Corinthians 6:3). The fallen angels—are they in heaven? The Bible says that Jesus will be riding on a white horse when He returns to reign on the earth, but we do not know if this is a literal horse (see Revelation 19:11). A white horse represents purity and power, so this may be symbolic.

We do know that we will be able to recognize our loved ones in heaven, and we will experience great joy over being reunited with them (see Luke 23:42-43, Hebrews 12:22-23). Your real self will live on in heaven, not some shadowy part of you. You will never feel so alive as when you enter into the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem God has prepared for the saints.

There is also going to be an extension of man’s mind beyond anything we could begin to understand now. There will be an opening of understanding into the secrets and mysteries of the universe. Furthermore, in heaven there will be no fear of any kind of evil, and God will provide magnificently for His people.

What is heaven like? It is better than anything any human being could ever imagine when he tries to picture the best thing that could ever happen to him. Beyond that, there is not much else we could say.

**How Can I Be Saved?**

We live in a chaotic and uncertain world. Events confront us that can make us ask questions: How can I know God and what is His plan for me, today? Even in the most troubled times you can be sure of these things:

1. **God loves you and has an incredible future planned for you.**

   In the Bible, God tells us: “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

   Jesus, Himself, when speaking about the people who belong to Him, put it this way: My purpose is to give life in all its fullness (John 10:10). Even when life seems out of control, you can be sure of this: God has a plan and a purpose for you. Because of God’s love for each one of us, He provided a plan for our salvation—the way that we can become a part of His family and live the life He has promised us.

2. **Our sins have separated us from God.**

   Mankind is sinful. We only have to look at the world around us to know this is true. We have not lived up to the standard of God’s holy and perfect law. As a result of our sin, we are separated from God. In this state of separation, we cannot know God or experience the peace and hope of the life He has planned for us.

   For all have sinned, all fall short of God’s glorious standard (Romans 3:23).

   For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).

   If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth (1 John 1:8).

   But, because of God’s deep love for each one of us, He provided the way of salvation—the only way that we are able to enter a relationship with Him. This plan is called “the Gospel.” The word Gospel means “Good News.” The Good News is that God Himself has already made all the arrangements for your salvation. No matter what you have done, Jesus Christ’s sacrifice is able to pay the penalty for your sin. God loves you and wants you to be His own child.

3. **Jesus Christ is the only provision for our sin.**

   Through Jesus Christ, you can experience a personal relationship with God and enjoy a life of peace and hope. When Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood for our sin, He bridged the gap that separated us from God. The Bible outlines this incredible plan:

   God showed us how much he loved us by sending his only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. (John 3:16). It is not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins (1 John 4:9-10).

   So we praise God for the wonderful kindness he has poured out on us because we belong to his dearly loved Son. He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our
sins are forgiven (Ephesians 1:6-7).

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sins, so that we could be made right with God through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

It is only through Jesus Christ that we can know God personally. It is through Jesus alone that we can experience God’s love, enjoy peace and hope, and receive the gift of eternal life.

4. We must each receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Just to give mental agreement that Jesus died on the cross is not enough. Each of us must turn to God, acknowledging our sin and powerlessness to save ourselves. We must ask Jesus to come into our lives and receive His sacrifice as total payment for our sins. We exercise our will and do this as an act of faith.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

I assure you, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life (John 5:24).

Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again” (John 11:25).

God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it (Romans 2:9).

God sees and understands your heart. There are no magic words or precise formulas you must pray or say. You can talk to God right now in the quietness of your heart and invite Him into your life as your Lord and Savior. Here’s a simple prayer:

“Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me and dying on the cross for my sin. I want to know You personally. I invite You into my life as my Lord and Savior. Thank you for forgiving me of all my sins and for the gift of eternal life. Help me to grow close to You in this new life You’ve given me.”

If this prayer expresses the longing of your heart, pray it right now. Jesus will hear you. He will save you and come into your heart and life. You will become a child of God and receive eternal life. If you have made a decision to trust Jesus, you have been born into God’s family. The promise to you is that He will never leave you or abandon you.

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

I will never fail you. I will never forsake you (Hebrews 13:5).

One of the best things you can do right now is to tell someone about your decision.

For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).

God has given you another gift. Now that you have believed in Jesus, God has sent His Holy Spirit to live in your heart. The Holy Spirit will help you in your new life and teach you about God. God tells us His Holy Spirit is our Comforter and Counselor, who will bring us peace and guide us into all truth.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth (John 14:16-17).

And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit. . . . The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us everything he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. This is just one more reason for us to praise our glorious God (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The Bible says we are to grow in our faith. We do this through praying to God, reading the Bible, spending time with other Christians, and obeying the Holy Spirit’s prompting in our lives. Please call The 700 Club Prayer Counseling Center at 800-759-0700 or log on to CBN.com. We have prayer counselors who care about you and will pray with you, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We have free materials and information that will help you in your new life with Jesus.

Remember, now that you belong to Jesus, nothing can separate you from Him. No matter what happens, you have God’s promise of eternal life and His peace and protection for your life now.

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can’t, and life can’t. The angels can’t, and the demons can’t. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can’t keep God’s love away. Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

God bless you! May the joy of God’s salvation fill your heart, today and always.

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