

"What We Believe"

Session 15

Kingdom-- God Reigns

I) INTRODUCTION

- A) The Doctrine of the Last Things is one of the most important Doctrines in the New Testament, for this is our message. Every message that we preach as Christians comes from and stems from this reality: There is a King, who oversees a Kingdom and He is coming to establish both His rule and His reign here on the earth.
- B) Eternity, judgment and the future coming Kingdom of God have been among the most neglected and miss-interpreted topics throughout Church history.
- C) It's a shame that so many Churches, preachers and Christians shy away from these topics as they are to be our hope and glory. This is the primary thing Christians are called to live for, the future coming Kingdom of God.
- D) **Romans 13:11-14** *"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the Day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."* Paul wrote this in A.D. 57 which means it was written 1,955 years ago.
- E) We don't want to treat these topics as David Pawson said, "...like a child who looks at and pushes around his vegetables on the plate, but never eats them." We must look at them, understand them, stand for them and speak them to others.

II) What Is The Kingdom Of God?

- A) At its simplest form, the Kingdom of God is His mission to rescue and redeem His sin-marred creation through Jesus the King, establishing His rule and reign over all creation, defeating human and angelic evil powers, bringing order to all, enacting justice and being worshipped as Lord over all.
- B) **Psalm 2** is a powerful prophetic Psalm, describing the coming of Christ and His Kingdom.
- C) The Kingdom of God is both a journey and a destination. God doesn't want us to be naive, as if the Kingdom is fully here, and He doesn't want us to be hopeless, as if the Kingdom hasn't begun. The Kingdom has come and is coming.
- D) God is going to work His rescue mission not by destroying the earth, but by recreating it, using humans who are a part of the problem to be part of the solution.
- E) The Kingdom of God is not something that we observe, but something we participate in helping to release it, in part now, and in fullness to come.
- F) The coming Kingdom and the pressures involved aren't something happening *to us* by the devil, but something happening through us, by worship, prayer, proclamation and missions.

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- G) Jesus and His Kingdom will bring righteousness where there is injustice, beauty where there is devastation, forgiveness where there is sin, healing where there is sickness and fullness of life where there is death.
- H) The earth is filled with crisis, hardship and pain that we can't fix, because we are the problem. It's ultimately fixed through Jesus' return.
- I) **Revelation 5.**

III) What Happens When Christians Die And Are Resurrected?

- A) Death is the separation of the body and the spirit which are closely intertwined. Christian belief about death is that our body goes into the grave and our spirit goes into eternity. Upon the death of Christians, the spirit goes to be with Jesus (**Acts 7:59; Rev. 6:9-10**).
 - 1) **2nd Corinthians 5:1-10** *"We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."*
 - 2) The Bible declares the immediate state of the righteous dead is one of rest (**Rev. 14:13**), waiting (**Rev. 6:10, 11**), activity (**Rev. 7:15**) and holiness (**Rev. 7:14**).
- B) It should be clear that the righteous dead do not have a body, and have not yet stood before the Judgment seat of Christ to be judged and receive their final rewards.
- C) We do not believe in what's called *soul sleep*. This belief says that the departed soul goes away until Judgment. Though the Bible says that Christians who have died are asleep (**1st Corinthians 15:20**) we don't take this to mean that in death we aren't with Christ, because we are. We just don't have a physical body yet.
- D) At the sound of the seventh trumpet (**1st Cor. 15:51-53; Rev. 11:15-18**) the dead in Christ will rise first (**1st Thess. 4:16-17**) followed by all those who are alive (**1st Thess. 4:17**) when Christ comes and we all will receive our resurrected bodies (**1st Cor. 15:51-54**) and head to the Judgment seat of Christ for our final judgment and rewards (**Rev. 11:17-18; 2nd Tim. 4:1 Rev.22:12**).
 - 1) **1st Corinthians 15:51-53** *"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*
 - 2) **1st Thessalonians 4:16-17** *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*
 - 3) **Revelation 11:15-18** *"Then the seventh angel sounded....And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great..."*
- E) After we stand before the Judgment seat of Christ (**1st Cor. 5:10**) and receive our final rewards and judgments (**1st Cor.3:10-15**) we then return with Christ back to the earth (**Rev.19:14**) to rule and reign with Him (**Rev.5:10**), in physical resurrected bodies on this physical earth (**Rev. 19:19**).

IV) What Happens When Sinners Die And Are Resurrected?

- A) Just like Christians, when sinners die their body goes into the grave (**Luke 16:23**) and their spirit goes to hell awaiting the final judgment for their life (**Rev. 20:11-15**). Hell isn't the final destination for the sinner; the Lake of Fire is (**Rev. 20:14-15**). Hell (Hades) is a temporary prison for the sinner, prior to the Lake of Fire (**Rev.20:14-15**).
- B) Just like Christians, upon death, sinners understand their eternal destination is separated from Christ, although they haven't been sentenced yet (**Luke 16:19-31**).
- C) No description of the resurrected body of the wicked is mentioned in the Bible, other than the reality that they have a body (**Matthew 10:28**).
- D) The resurrection of the wicked is 1,000 years after the Christians' resurrection (**Rev. 20:7-15**) and it is called the *second death* (**Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14**).
- E) Christians and sinners stand before the same Judge just at different Judgment seats. Christians stand before what's called the Judgment Seat of Christ (**2nd Cor. 5:10**) and sinners stand before what's called the Great White Throne of judgment (**Rev. 20:11**). Christians aren't standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ for salvation, but for rewards and judgments, salvation is secured for us in death (**1st Cor. 3:13-15**). Sinners on the other hand are standing before judgment to be separated from Christ into the Lake of Fire forever (**Rev. 20:13-15**).

V) What Does The Bible Teach About Heaven?

- A) Heaven is not where believers spend eternity. Contrary to popular misconception, we do not spend eternity off in space somewhere, separated from our body and the rest of God's physical creation. PRAISE THE LORD!
- B) God creates the heavens in **Genesis 1:1** and recreates them in **Revelation 21:1**.
- C) According to the Bible our eternal home will be on a new earth where we will live forever.
- D) As Christians, we don't believe in what Hollywood and much of Christianity tries to sell us about the end of this world. We believe in the end of this age (**Matt. 12:31-32; 24:3**) and in the age to come. Here is how heaven comes down to us;
 - 1) The Church is raptured (**1st Cor. 15:52; 1st Thess. 4:16-17**).
 - 2) We receive rewards and judgments in the sky with Christ (**1st Thess. 4:17-18**).
 - 3) We return back to the earth with Christ for 1,000 yrs (**Rev.19:14, 19; 20:6**).
 - 4) At the close of the 1,000 yr reign, after the devil and all sinners have been judged, then the first heaven and the first earth are done away with and the new Heaven, the new earth and the New Jerusalem come down to us. This is where we live for eternity (**Rev. 21:1-8**).
- E) There are lots of questions that the Bible doesn't answer about heaven such as: will we know each other; what age will we be; will there be gender; will there be animals?

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- F) What we do know is that heaven is a place where Jesus is, those who have loved Him, bright light, colors, no shadows, and totally real. To anyone but lovers of Christ, this would be hell itself. But for us who have loved Him and loved His appearing, there will be no greater place.

VI) What Does The Bible Teach About Hell?

- A) Jesus spoke about hell more than any other topic in the Bible. Thirteen percent of Jesus' conversations were centered on hell and judgment; and more than half of all His parables relate to the eternal judgment of sinners. Jesus did this because He is the kindest Man alive! He wants all with Him!
- B) Some Bible teachers say that there is a reference to hell in all 260 chapters of the 27 books of the New Testament. If you made a sign for each of those 260 chapters and placed them over a distance of 17 miles, there would be a sign every 540 feet. And if you were driving around 60 MPH you would pass a sign every 6 seconds.
- C) The Bible doesn't give us line upon line teaching about hell, but it does give us general information about it;
- 1) Fire (**Matt 13:42**), darkness (**Matt. 25:30**), punishment (**Rev. 14:10-11**) exclusion from God's presence (**Matt. 7:23**), restlessness (**Rev. 14:11**), second death (**Rev. 2:11**) a place of weeping (**Matt. 13:41**) and it is eternal, forever (**Rev. 20:10**).
- D) Some say that these statements aren't to be taken literally. These statements are trying to describe the indescribable. They aren't to decrease their meaning, but rather help us see that it's much more than we can understand.
- E) The Lake of Fire isn't a party, a gathering of people, or a reunion. The devil doesn't rule in the Lake of Fire, because it was created for his eternal punishment (**Rev. 20:10**).
- F) Here are some objections to the Doctrine of hell:
- 1) A loving God would never send billions to a horrible hell.
 - (i) God actually won't send anyone to hell; people will make their own choice. We were made to be with Him, but if we don't want to be, we don't have to be. In the end people will get the god that they want.
 - 2) A loving God would be more tolerant.
 - (i) People who judge God need to really consider if they would be more pleased if God were tolerant of rapists, pimps, pedophiles and those who have sinned against us most wickedly. God is not tolerant of people who don't like the way of Jesus. He is patient but not tolerant.
 - (ii) A loving Father protects His children from sin and evil by separating them. God is intolerant just as we are intolerant with those who drink and drive, steal, rape and murder; therefore we separate them from the rest of society.

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- G) Hell is not a place of temporary punishment, or probation, or a state of non-existence. Hell is a place of eternal punishment. It is self chosen and self inflicted. We don't believe in what's called Annihilationism.

VII) What's The Conclusion?

- A) **Revelation 22:18-21** *For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book; if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his name from the book of life, from the holy city and from the things which are written in this book. He who testifies to these things says, “surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*