

Life's Ultimate Questions:
What about the Place of My Ultimate Eternal Destiny?
Jeremiah 31:27-34 & Hebrews 10:1-18

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Text: “The days are coming”—this is the LORD’s declaration—“when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. ²⁸Just as I watched over them to uproot and to tear them down, to demolish and to destroy, and to cause disaster, so will I be attentive to build and to plant them,” says the LORD. ²⁹“In those days, it will never again be said:

The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
and the children’s teeth are set on edge.

³⁰ Rather, each will die for his own wrongdoing. Anyone who eats sour grapes—his own teeth will be set on edge.

³¹ “Look, the days are coming”—this is the LORD’s declaration—“when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³²This one will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant they broke even though I had married them”—the LORD’s declaration. ³³“Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days”—the LORD’s declaration. “I will put My teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people. ³⁴No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest of them”—this is the LORD’s declaration. “For I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sin.”

Introduction: This summer, we have considered the Prophet Jeremiah applying his ancient message to Israel/Judah to our lives in a contemporary way by saying here are some of the life’s ultimate questions. Using Jeremiah as our guide, we have considered such questions as: What is the purpose of my life, Is God watching over me (God’s providence), What is really important, What do I do when life seems so overwhelming, What about my future, etc. It seems that we could not consider a list of life’s ultimate questions without giving attention to **the place of my eternal destiny**. Here is THE ultimate question of life. For what is the benefit of having plans for your future or a purpose for your life if this question is uncertain? Everything in life hinges upon this question of eternal destiny.

Death is something about which all of us must think. There is no getting around death. To add just one bit of reality to what we are talking about this morning, approximately 6400 people will die somewhere in the world in this one hour that we are in this service. It is not going to matter for those persons how much money they have, what their education is, or the circumstances of their death. For every person, and to some degree to those they leave behind only one thing matters: Where will that person spend eternity. I want you to think about this morning as it applies to you.

If we are going to consider this question of our eternal destiny this morning, it seems to me that we will have to give attention to at least two questions.

Question #1: Is there really a heaven and a hell?

1. The Word of God declares Heaven and Hell. Matthew 7:13-14 indicates a narrow gate leading to life and a wide gate leading to destruction. In Matthew 25:31ff. Jesus designated the kingdom of God to be like a shepherd separating sheep and goats. He concludes by saying in verse 46, "These (in reference to the unrighteous) will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." In Luke 16:19ff. Jesus gave us a story about the rich man and Lazarus which delineates that there is a place of permanent judgment for those that do not repent. In Revelation 20:15, John is receiving that vision of eternal judgment and the Spirit of God shows him on that day of final judgment when "if anyone's name was not found in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The bottom line seems to be that if we do not believe in eternal life or death, in essence, we are calling God a liar, because the clear teaching of the Word of God declares the reality of Heaven and Hell.

2. The Wrath of God demands Heaven and Hell. God is Holy and cannot look upon our sin. The Bible declares that the wages of our sin is death.
3. The Will of Humanity dictates Heaven and Hell. Why would God make someone spend eternity in Heaven who didn't want to go there?
4. The Witness of Human experience discerns Heaven and Hell. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that "He has put eternity in {our} hearts." The conclusion of so many is that there must be something more than this life. Now, don't misunderstand, we are not suggesting that human testimony is more important than the Word of God, but when human testimony matches the Word of God, we can believe it. The fact is that God, according to the writer of Ecclesiastes, has set eternity in the heart of humanity.

Question #2: How does one get to Heaven?

Jeremiah, in the midst of an immediate prophetic word to Israel, begins to see, from God, a day that he calls A New Covenant.

Let's trace this idea of the covenant.

Abrahamic Covenant—God promised Abraham descendants, land, and to be his forever God. The covenant was sealed with male circumcision.

Mosaic Covenant—The important thing to note about the Mosaic covenant is that it is based on the law, the 10 commandments, along with other laws. The covenant reminder is sacrifice and offering. Jeremiah indicates a day is coming when "I will make a new Covenant."

There are some other covenants in the Old Testament, but let's get to the covenant referenced by Jeremiah.

A New Covenant

- Jeremiah 31:27-34

- Luke 22:20—At Last Supper, Jesus said, “This cup is the new covenant established by My blood; it is shed for you.” This is repeated by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:25.
- Hebrews 10:1-18

Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the actual form of those realities, it can never perfect the worshipers by the same sacrifices they continually offer year after year. ² Otherwise, wouldn't they have stopped being offered, since the worshipers, once purified, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But in the sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵ Therefore, as He was coming into the world, He said:

You did not want sacrifice and offering,
but You prepared a body for Me.

⁶ You did not delight
in whole burnt offerings and sin offerings.

⁷ Then I said, “See—
it is written about Me
in the volume of the scroll—
I have come to do Your will, God!”

⁸ After He says above, You did not want or delight in sacrifices and offerings, whole burnt offerings and sin offerings (which are offered according to the law), ⁹ He then says, See, I have come to do Your will. He takes away the first to establish the second. ¹⁰ By this will of God, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all.

¹¹ Every priest stands day after day ministering and offering the same sacrifices time after time, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³ He is now waiting until His enemies are made His footstool. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified. ¹⁵ The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. For after He says:

¹⁶ This is the covenant I will make with them
after those days, says the Lord:
I will put My laws on their hearts
and write them on their minds,

¹⁷ He adds:

I will never again remember
their sins and their lawless acts.

¹⁸ Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

The Blood of Jesus Christ is the inauguration of the New Covenant. The Cross is the fulfillment of the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah.

There is a barrier between every human and God caused by our sin, but this new covenant knocks down that barrier.

The Description of the New Covenant:

1. Initiated by the Father. The dominant phrase of Jeremiah 31 is "I will." Only way to go from one side of the wall to the other side of the wall is if God does the work. He did through Jesus.
2. Once For All Sacrifice. Hebrews 10:10
3. Forgiveness of Sin is the Result. Hebrews 10:18

Jeremiah 31 gives us this rather odd but popular philosophy" in verse 27 that the exiles believed that they were being punished for their ancestry's sins. Jeremiah was poking holes in that argument by revealing that they were being held accountable for their own sin. What was needed was not another covenant renewal ceremony as under Moses or Joshua, or recently under King Josiah, but rather an internal transformation based upon the divine provision of complete forgiveness.

The Demands of the New Covenant:

1. Admit that you are in need of forgiveness.
2. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Confess Him as Lord and Commit your life to Him.

Conclusion: An evangelist of another generation, D.L. Moody, preached on the evening of the Great Chicago Fire in Chicago. He sent his listeners home that evening without extending a formal invitation. Instead, he sent them home to think about it one week. He regretted that decision the rest of his life.

I can't do that this morning. I must call you to a response. Many of you are Christians already, and we rejoice in that. Not of works, lest we boast, but out of the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ, have we been saved.

Here are our three choices:

1. I am already a follower of Jesus Christ and because of that I am not going to hell and instead going to heaven.
2. I am deciding today to follow Jesus Christ so that I will not go to hell and instead go to heaven.
3. I still have questions.