

## Heaven and Hell

It has only been very recently that I have begun to really grasp that I am going to heaven when I die. I knew the truth of this, but I didn't really think about it. One day, I found some new mole or lump or something that, for a brief moment, caused me some concern. I caught myself thinking, "Well, I would go to heaven and be with the Lord. That would be okay!"

I have heard people talk and preach about the hope of heaven but I just could not get my head around that. This is no surprise coming from the woman who could not relate a huge belly to a baby in my arms! I am extremely concrete. If I can't physically see something, I have a hard time envisioning it. And I can't see heaven.

The whole premise of this course is that salvation is the bottom rung of the ladder for the Christian. We want to be sanctified, which is to mature in our faith. We want that maturity to be according to God's Word. If it *is* all about getting into heaven, why worry about sanctification? If I can go to heaven because I have received salvation, why bother with spiritual growth? Why is it important to know as much as we can about Heaven and Hell?

Let's think about the word salvation. What is it that we are being saved from? We're being saved from an eternity in hell! Spiritual growth is confirmation of salvation. In this life, our salvation gives us the assurance of the forgiveness of our sin and the knowledge that we will be freed from the penalty of that sin. The penalty is hell. The Bible says that "the wages of sin is death." There has to be death for sin. If we choose to let Jesus Christ's death on the cross cover our sin, then we go to heaven. If we choose

not to receive Christ as our Savior, then we pay the penalty ourselves – in hell for eternity. I thank God for the faith to believe this is true. If you have not yet fully believed this truth, ask Him, and He will give you the faith you need so that you, too, will spend eternity in heaven in His grace, not in hell in His wrath.

The question of heaven and hell is one that every single person faces in their lifetime. We will die. What we believe about heaven and hell will influence the way we live and the way we die.

There are four common beliefs prevalent in our culture about the end of life.

1. When we die, we cease to exist. 2. When we die, we all go to heaven. 3. When we die, we just get recycled, reincarnated– we keep coming back. 4. When we die, we are judged, and we go either to heaven or hell.

The first is dismissable without a lot of research. If we just cease to exist, then people have been wrong about this one forever. We know in our hearts that we live for eternity. Most Americans don't think seriously about it, but if we look back in history we can see how most people anticipated an afterlife. The Egyptian pyramids were built on a belief in an afterlife. People were buried in tombs, taking their toys and their valuables with them!

In his letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul said if we only believe in Christ for this world we are to be pitied!" (1 Corinthians 15:19). Ecclesiastes says that God has placed eternity in our hearts. . People long for more. This is why they want to take their toys with them when they die. Even in our fear of death we prove a belief that there's more because we are afraid of it. We know there will be another life but we have no idea what it will be like so we are afraid.

The second common belief is that all people will go to heaven. This one offends our sense of justice and certainly God's justice, as well. This belief is called universalism, and is the "tolerant" view. This belief says that it doesn't matter what you do here, or whether or not you believe in the One, True God. It asserts that whatever god you choose is all forgiving and that all paths lead to heaven. This false belief contradicts Scripture left and right. The Bible clearly says that Jesus was sent to the world to save all who would believe (John 3:16). However, it also says that He was rejected and despised and that He is the only Way to know God. If a person who never repents of their rejection of Jesus were to be saved, it would make a mockery of what Christ did for us when He took our sin upon Himself on the cross. This belief makes "religion" easy and comfortable. If everyone goes to heaven, we would never need to obey God, talk about Jesus or tell people that He's the only way.

The third belief is that we keep coming back. This originated in Eastern religions, but is common among many people in our country. Hindus and Buddhists believe in the concept of "karma" which is a work or an action. They believe in a system of reward or punishments based on karma. They believe reincarnation as their next chance to work out the damnable consequences of their "bad Karma." They move up and down the scale of beings based on how good or bad the karma.

This belief flies in the face of everything Christ did for us. He died one time for all who would believe, taking our sin. If we have to pay some debt by living over again and trying to move up a chain of beings – His death on the cross was all for naught.

The final belief is the one that the Bible clearly teaches. It tells us that we will face judgment at our death. Many think that this judgment will be based on our works.

Ephesians 2:8-10 clearly teaches that works will not save us so that no one may boast. We are saved by receiving the grace of God when He offers us the gift of faith.

The writer of Hebrews says that it was destined that we would die once and then face judgment. (Hebrews 9:27). Jesus said, “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.” Matthew 5:29-30.

He made no mention of karma, no mention of coming back to try again or that everyone will be saved. He clearly, says we can only do something about not going to hell right now, in this life. Christ has given us this chance to receive the gift of faith leading to eternal life with Jesus, at the right hand of God, in heaven!

Belief in heaven and hell is good, it is biblical, and it is necessary to make the right choice when God makes the offer of faith! How have you and I responded to His offer of faith?

I remember when we first started attending a Bible-believing church. My children were in junior high. They came home one day after hearing a teaching that hell was separation from God. My son seemed to think that this didn't sound too bad. If hell was only separation, he thought he could handle it! Well, have you considered what life without God would be like?

Think about what you learn just in the Psalms about God's attributes. He is our strength (46:1), our shield (46:1; 84:11), our ever-present help in times of need. (46:1) He is the God of light (84:11). Life without Him is to live in darkness – all the time. He

is the One who upholds all life. To be separated is to have life decay around us.

Ephesians 2: 12 says that no God means no hope. He is gracious (116:5) and He is the One who blesses us (144:15). To be separated from God would be nothing short of terrifying. When you and I live through difficult or even tragic circumstances we have the assurance of scripture that this will ultimately be worked out for our good. If there is no God there is no good. Nothing, the circumstances are for naught, they just *are*, no good can come from them. What on earth would be our motivation to get out of bed in the morning?

Look at 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 with me. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—(do you see the descending order of strength in the gold to the weakness of the straw?) each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, (this is the day of judgment, capital “D”.) because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. (Think about the difference in what will happen to works of gold verses works of straw in a fire.) If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

This looks to me like there will be some sort of division in heaven, maybe levels, I do not know what it will look like. What I know is that the person who makes a real profession of faith in Christ, but gives God little service and mediocre efforts will escape into heaven as one escapes going through fire. People who go through fire and survive it, wouldn't recommend it! They come out burned.

So, you can see that what you believe about heaven and hell heavily influences how you think and behave in this life. It determines what we use to build our faith. When we die, we will be judged personally for the thoughts and behaviors we exhibited in this life. Any study of heaven and hell requires a study of the criteria for entering.

No one likes to talk or even think about people going to hell. These days, people are very uncomfortable with this. However, it is a biblical fact that some will go there. Actually, the Bible is clear on who will go to heaven and who will go to hell.

Listen to Revelation 20:11-15. **Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

I'm sorry to tell you that I can't really explain exactly how everything in these verses will happen. But I accept that they are true. The point we have to grasp is that we will be judged and there will be people who will be thrown into the lake of fire because their name had not been written in the Book of Life. God is paying attention to our faith and our deeds. Names go into the Book of Life based on faith. Judgment is serious business to the Lord. In fact, the Bible says in 2 Peter 3:9 that God has been slow in initiating Christ's return so that more would come to repentance. The verse says, "The

Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

There are people sitting in our churches every week who do not know the Lord. He is patient. He is waiting for their profession of faith. Do you know how to recognize who that person is? We often misinterpret Matthew 7 which says “Do not judge.” We can’t really know a person’s heart, but in Matthew 7:20, Jesus says that we will know a Christian by their fruit. If we see no fruit, we may need to point out the realities of the gospel to that person.

So, when God is done waiting, the Bible says that there will be two judgments. The first one determines whether we spend eternity with God in heaven or separated from Him in hell.

Our names go into the Book of Life based on God’s choosing and our faith. The verse I read from Revelation 20 that talks about being judged according to what we have done, refers to the evidence of our faith. We will be judged by whether our deeds were done out of love and service to the Lord or out of selfish pride. Our deeds will not save us, only faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as payment for our sin saves us. This is a common misconception, many people are trying to work their way to Heaven. Our deeds reveal our hearts. So, in this first judgment we will be judged on whether or not we have put our faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible is clear that there is no other way to get into heaven. Only one road gets anyone there. Anyone who did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God who paid the price for their sin will be eternally punished.

Romans 8:1 teaches that those who have believed in Christ will receive no condemnation. This verse is about God's judgment. Faith will keep us from being condemned to an eternity of punishment. Believers will pass through the first judgment without any problem or threat.

The second judgment is for believers. One commentator said that it is really more of an evaluation because there is no condemnation. Matthew 16:27 says, **For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.** We will be judged for what we have done or have not done.

Think about normal human situations. In marriage we look for the faithfulness of a partner to show us love. In business we look for integrity in keeping promises or contracts. As with those things, good deeds confirm our faithfulness to Christ. Jesus says that real faith will be known by the change it produces in a person's life and in the fruit it bears, which means, how it has brought forth the new life in God for others. (Matthew 7:15-20).

One of my resources for writing this lesson was a little book called "What About Heaven and Hell?" by Douglas Rumford. He set forth six qualities that we will be judged on. I am going to go through them, but not in detail. You looked at these verses in your study questions, but consider each of these areas in your own life.

He says we will be judged on the depth of our commitment to Christ. Certainly God knows our hearts and though we may act like all we do is for the Lord, God knows. He says there will be some who at judgment say, "Lord, Lord" and He will say, "I never

knew you” Do you and I demonstrate a genuine commitment to Jesus Christ? Do others see it?

The second one is character. Do we show integrity in the way we live? Do we live according to God’s Word? Each one of us will sin everyday – in thought, word, or deed. The question we have to ask is, “does it bother me?” Is sin a problem for me or am I skipping along with no conviction of sin? Our own sin disturbs the Christian with Christ-like character. Are you and I pursuing character that honors God?

The third one is caring or compassion. Jesus said if we fail to do something for the least of His people on earth then we have failed to do it for Him. This can range from the smallest greeting to the largest sum of time or money we can afford to give to help someone. Are we caring for anyone, especially “the least” in any practical way?

The fourth thing we’ll be evaluated on is our service – which could be tied to others but this one he relates specifically to the gifts God has given you. If we look at 1 Corinthians 12 we see a list of gifts that God gives to His people for them to use in service to Him. They are God’s investment in us and He expects a return on them. Are you and I using our gifts in some consecrated service to the Lord who gave us the gift? How are we serving God in our churches? Everyone should have a job in their church.

Fifth is witness. Remember that witnessing is nothing more than telling about our own experience. God said we are to be salt and light. If we fail to tell others what Jesus has done for us – no one else is going to. Are we consistently talking about what He has done for us or what we learn from His word?

Finally, we’ll be judged on our perseverance. The Book actually calls it courageous perseverance. If others turned against us or we were to begin to see real

persecution of Christians in this country (which is not far fetched) could we be courageous in our witness for Jesus Christ? Would you and I point others to the Love of God in sending His Son? Would we continue to do good deeds in His name regardless of the consequences? We may not think we have been tried on these but we will be judged on them at the second judgment.

I read a book called “The Heavenly Man.” It is the biography of a present day house church leader in China. It is the most fantastic story of how God protects His people who persevere in their witness for Him. This man was arrested, tortured in ways we can’t imagine, separated from his family in prison, and lives to tell. The challenge that I got from that book was that this man could hold firmly to His faith and witness through the most terrifying circumstances and we have a hard time if someone thinks we’ve gotten so holy that they don’t invite us to a party! This second judgment will show us who we really are.

Now, just for the record though I can’t teach you too much about them because the Bible is sketchy at best, there are rewards given at this second judgment. The Bible calls them crowns. Rewards are based on what we have done here. Douglass Rumford who wrote the book (Heaven and Hell) compares our rewards at the second judgment to the hugs that participants in the Special Olympics receive. The reward is for faithful participation – not whether or not we win the race. We receive rewards for faithful participation in our work for and service to the Lord. In large part this is about relationships. If we are building up others then we are building the Kingdom of God.

The first crown is the crown of life that James mentions in James 1:12. It seems, by his description, that this is a crown earned by staying faithful as we pass through the tests and trials of this life.

The second crown is the one Paul talks about near the end of his life in 2 Timothy 4:6-8. This crown is apparently for finishing well, for maintaining our integrity over the long haul of life.

The third crown is the crown of incorruptibility. Paul mentions this one in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Any reward we might gain on earth is corruptible, either in the way it is given or received or the way it lasts. At the time this was written the Olympians received a wreath made of leaves that would eventually become brittle and fall apart. No reward we receive in heaven will become corrupted in any way.

The fourth crown is the crown of rejoicing. (1 Thessalonians 2:19) This is the crown of the evangelist. Paul told the Thessalonians that his greatest joy was those who had come to know Jesus Christ. You and I need to think about whether or not there is anyone in the world who can say they know and love Jesus because of our witness.

The fifth crown is the crown of glory. 1 Peter 5:2-4 speaks of this crown as the crown God gives for faithful service. The author of the Book "What about Heaven and Hell" says that with this crown God is, in effect saying, "I will recognize your invisible hours. I will recognize the secret burdens that you carry because you are active in my service. I will repay you for all you paid, your service to all through a crown of glory."

These are all crowns that we will use in heaven to give back to God, recognizing His enabling in all we have ever done for Him (Revelation 4:10-11). These rewards are for Christians at the second judgment.

So, for those who go to the first judgment and are condemned to spend eternity in hell, what are they receiving? This was really hard to read about but I am convinced that it would be wrong to spare you the details. Not to talk about it is to pretend we don't have to worry about those who might be going there. I know that I do not want anyone's blood on my hands because I failed to witness. We need to know the details to be motivated. This is not to be used as a scare tactic – though these details should frighten us to action. All I want to do is present the dangers of hell as realistically as I can.

The Bible gives us few passages that clearly describe hell. That means that we have to be careful what we say about it. I am going to try to stick to only what we learn from the scriptures.

According to 2 Peter 2 which talks about punishment for false prophets and teachers, there will be no grace in hell. God extended grace to Noah in the judgment of the world by saving Him from the flood. He then extended grace to Lot by sparing him when He judged Sodom and Gomorrah. He extended them grace because they were righteous in a world of unrighteous people. He did *not* extend grace to the unrighteous but judged them by flood in Noah's day and burning up Sodom and Gomorrah. Hell will house only the unrighteous. There will be no more opportunity to repent, to be spared. Once in hell, grace is absent. Think about the ramifications of that. We really have no concept of the grief we cause God in our sin and we don't see the full affect our sin has on others, either those in our own generation or generations to follow. It is likely that in hell people will see all of their sin and the depth of the pain and anguish they have caused others. How painful would that be?

Mark 9:44 describes hell as a place where “their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.” D.L. Moody, who was the founder of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, believes that this “worm” is our memory. All of our memory will go into eternity with us. In hell we will have memory of all the sin we committed here and our lack of repentance – as well as the opportunities we had to repent. Those in hell will know great grief and regret.

Quoting from the book on heaven and hell, “Here on earth feelings of guilt and shame can sometimes lead to good, such as greater self control. In hell, however, no good comes of regret. Just more pain, more hardship, more desolation. Remembering will lead to self-accusation. Not only will people remember what they have done without the buffer of grace, but they will remember what they rejected.”

Hell will also be a place of endless misery. The New Testament describes hell as a place of unquenchable and eternal fire (Mark 9:43), a place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:30). I can only imagine this to be from remembering sin and seeing the consequences of it. Mark 9:47-48 talks about how that undying worm torments all of hell’s inhabitants. And in the Book of Revelation we learn that Hell(?) is the lake of fire and brimstone (20:10) and the second death (20:14). It is a place of destruction where the inhabitant is eternally cut off from the presence of God. (2 Thessalonians 1:9)

Can you imagine unending restlessness and affliction? That’s what I believe hell is. There is no peace in any form. Souls there will be tormented in relationships, in emotions, physically, and psychologically. There is absolutely no good thing there. No peace, no rest, no joy.

People like to argue about whether to take these descriptions literally or figuratively. I don't think it matters. Either way it is more terrible than anything we can think of or imagine and we should not want any person to go there.

Look at Luke 16 with me. This is the story of the rich man who feasted every day while Lazarus, a poor man, waited at his gate hungry and ill. We'll start reading in verse 22. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house-- for I have five brothers--so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

Obviously the rich man was not only in torment in Hell, but able to realize that his rejection of God had led him where he was. He wants his brothers warned but Abraham says if they didn't believe the scriptures they won't believe someone who returns from the dead. But he can see and speak across that chasm. How awful.

It may seem that it will also be awful for the person in heaven who may be able to see the torment of those in hell. The truth is that when we get to heaven we will be in full agreement with whatever decisions God has made. We will see His justice perfectly.

Let's agree that we not want to go to Hell nor do we want anyone we can speak to to go there!

So, let's end on a high note. What is heaven like? Ahhh! Listen to Revelation 21:1-7, **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."** And he who was seated on the throne said, **"Behold, I am making all things new."** Also he said, **"Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."** And he said to me, **"It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."**

The one on the throne says, "I will make all things new"! There are two Greek words used for "new". The first one refers to temporal newness like new clothes. The second one means qualitatively new, like something we have never seen before, something previously unknown or unprecedented. When we talk about heaven we are talking about the second new, something never seen before, unprecedented.

I will start with new bodies. Look at 1 Corinthians 15: 40-44, Paul tells us a little bit about our new bodies. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

I can't tell you exactly what these bodies will look like but we can gather a few principles from the scriptures. It seems that we will be unique individuals and that we will recognize each other when we are there. We take this principle from the Mount of transfiguration in Matthew 17. Jesus had taken Peter, James and John with Him. They recognized the visitors they saw, Elijah and Moses, who had been dead for centuries. When Jesus spoke of being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob He spoke of them in the present tense, not as some who once lived but as ones existing as He spoke.

Second is that our new bodies will be spiritual bodies. When we think of spiritual bodies – at least if you are close to my age, we tend to think Casper the friendly Ghost. What Paul means by a spiritual body is one that is subject to the power of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus appeared after His resurrection He had some great powers – like entering a room through a closed door (John 20:26) but generally people knew Him immediately but He could also hide His identity. He carried the scars from His death and ate and drank as a human. In heaven you and I will wholly cooperate with the Holy Spirit (oh, if that were only true in this life!). We will fight no temptations or struggle to do the right thing,

to do good. We will want to do good and have no inclination to do evil – evil doings won't even be a possibility.

In 1 John 3 John tells us that we can't even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. We cannot imagine it, but we will be like Him. We will share His glory – not that our glory will be exactly like His - He is the unique Son of God - but in some way we will share it. Perhaps this will be like children share the blessings of success with a parent.

Our bodies will be immortal. Again, I want to quote the book. “When we have our resurrection body, we will be indestructible. We'll be forever vital and energetic. Incorruptible. Strong. Resilient. We'll be impervious to any attack or any problem. There will be no aging in heaven. No degeneration. No decay.”

That is so opposite what is true for us in this life. Here we are destructible (both physically and emotionally) and our longings never get completely fulfilled. Doubt and disappointment can become overwhelming. Think about that and then Revelation 21:4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

What makes you sad in this life? What makes you cry? Is there any more personal picture of God and His people than Him wiping away the tears from their eyes?

I don't know if we can fathom a world that isn't suffering the consequences of the Fall. We will have full fellowship with the Triune God! No sin, no pollution, no immorality, or human frailness. Think about what that means to us. No sickness, no lies, no pornography ruining families. No abusive marriages or sex slaves or sexual abuse of any kind. No more being worried about where we walk by ourselves or saying the wrong

thing to the wrong person. There will be no concerns about getting scammed or taken for granted. Imagine a world with no mosquitoes! I don't have any biblical backup for the mosquitoes, but I can't imagine a paradise like heaven including them!

We will also be able to fully use the gifts God has given us. Does any one of us doubt that we have a whole lot of unrealized potential in the work that we do – secular or spiritual? In heaven we'll have fully developed talents and abilities. We'll also joyfully worship and glorify and praise the Lord around His throne.

There will no more night because God will provide the Light. Rev 21:23-25 **And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there.** The glory of God will be all the light and warmth that we need!

Okay, this is the best part. Revelation 21:3, **And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.**

Believers here will be in God's family in heaven, in His presence, under His perfect protection. We will be co-heirs with Jesus Christ. Can you imagine that? Because of our relationship with Jesus, we will receive an inheritance that is – in some way- equal to Christ's! That is unimaginable to me. We'll be like Dorothy saying, "There's no place like Home. There's no –place like Home!" We'll be one family, satisfied and unified before God.

The Bible really gives us all we need to know about heaven. It is hard to imagine how absolutely perfect it will be for us. It is what we were made for. Listen to the words

of Isaiah 35 starting in verse 10. Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

So – we can choose not to believe in Jesus' death and resurrection and be cast into the Lake of Fire where there will be darkness, destruction, grief, and weeping and gnashing of teeth. OR we can go to heaven and live with everlasting joy upon our heads where we will obtain gladness and joy, sorrow and sighing will be gone

Where would we rather be? No contest.

