

**Heaven and Hell Bible Study
Christ the King Lutheran Church
Commerce, GA**

Session 1: Eternal Life and Eternal Death (CONTINUED)

THE LESSON ON THE RECORDING BEGINS HERE. FOR THE FIRST PART OF SESSION 1, PLEASE ACCESS THE SERMON PAGE WHERE THE STUDY GUIDE AND RECORDING CAN BE FOUND.

8. Finish this equation: Sin=_____.

Based on what we have learned so far, we should be beginning to understand why there must be something more than what we experience in our current fallen world. God's plan all along has been to restore His creation to a state where there is no sin or death. This includes the restoration of the natural world with only beauty and benefit, devoid of natural disasters and plagues. Also restored will be the perfect fellowship between God and mankind as well as between people (see Genesis 2:18-24 in that Adam was not meant to be alone, but have a companion).

9. With all of this being said, then, is death a natural and intended part of the world?

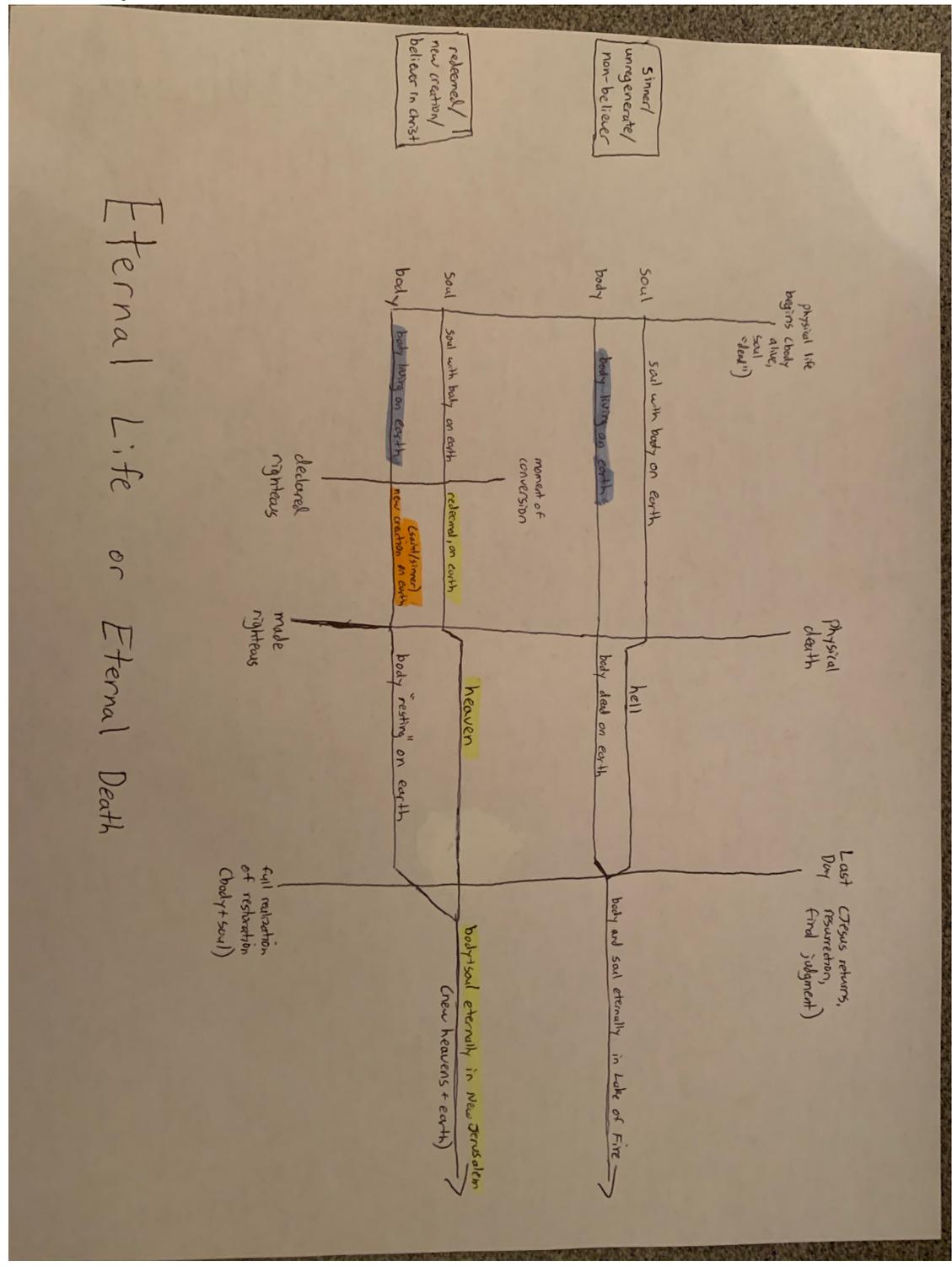
This is a fallen and broken world. It cannot be repaired anymore than we can "fix" ourselves. It must be replaced, just as our sin must be replaced by a righteousness that does not come from us ("alien righteousness").

10. All of us, unless Jesus returns first, will experience a physical death. Our booklet gives a good and simple definition of death. What is it? God's original design was for what two things to remain together? Will these be rejoined?

11. Even while our culture includes aspects that are accepting, callous, or even "celebratory" of death (examples) this secular worldview is not even consistent. Do we see examples where a strong "will to live" is evident?

When speaking of an existence beyond the one we currently experience, this is often referred to as the "afterlife" and we may use that terminology some in the class due to the familiar understanding of this. However, is this the best term to describe what we are talking about?

At this point take a look at the provided chart that gives a visual way to understand life, death, and eternity.



While physical death is something that everyone will experience (save Enoch, Elijah, and those on earth when Jesus returns), it is not fully an "afterlife" in the strict sense of the word. We can

see that after our physical death, there is a continuation rather than simply a “hard break”. Yes, our bodies and souls will be separated at the point of physical death, but only temporarily. As Christians, we actually have eternal life right now. Our souls have been saved on account of what Jesus has done for us and the Holy Spirit has delivered. We will be temporarily separated from our physical bodies for a time, but our living soul does not die as it continues to live in heaven and then at the last day enters with our glorified body into the New Jerusalem (new heaven and earth). On the other side of the spectrum, those without Christ—who stubbornly refuse God’s gift of grace and remain in their sins are already dead (and we all start out this way due to original sin). God, in His mercy, still gives them physical life for a time (and thus time to repent and trust God). However, if they go to the grave in this state they continue in this death and experience the wrath of God upon sin. Their souls will too be reunited with their bodies, but in everlasting death as opposed to everlasting life.

We have established an understanding of how the “afterlife” is a key aspect of God’s plan for the world and reflects His will and character. It is much more than an escape hatch! We know that there are two possible eternal destinations: heaven or hell. In the next lesson we will look more specifically at how one’s eternal destination is determined.

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Session 2: Getting to Heaven and Hell

In preparation for this session, read pages 4-10 in *A Simple Explanation of Heaven and Hell*

In the first session we learned that eternity was part of God’s plan from the beginning. We were not designed to die, but to live eternally with God. Death entered the world because of our sin. But God also had a plan to restore life, in both body and soul, to its eternal state. Heaven and hell are real places. They are not just metaphors for good and bad experiences as some see heaven and hell on earth. Indeed, we see both God’s wrath and mercy on display in our fallen world—but not in their full measure. Eternity in a place separate from what we now experience is necessary for this and is clearly taught in the Bible. As some have said, “For the Christian earth is the closest thing to hell they will ever experience, for the non-Christian earth is the closest thing to heaven they will ever experience.”

How does one end up in either heaven or hell? This class will examine the answer to that question. It will also answer when we begin experiencing this. Finally, hell is a difficult doctrine for some people so we need to understand why it is necessary.

A Word on Election

The doctrine of election (predestination) is clearly taught in the Scripture. However, understanding exactly what it means has been a point of debate for many Christians. In short, we know that God is in control of all things. We know that He has all knowledge of the past, present, and future. Both “free will” in terms of “choosing God”, and “double predestination” in which God chooses some to be saved and some to be damned (thus Jesus only died for some) are not correct. God knows exactly who will be saved and be with Him eternally. The Bible also tells us that it is God’s desire that none perish and all come to a knowledge of the truth. How do we reconcile these two truths? We cannot logically do so, but we believe it in faith because this is what God reveals to us in His Word.

Stating the Obvious

1. God is _____ meaning that He rules over all things.
2. When one is redeemed (saved) and thus will spend eternity in heaven, it is all _____ doing.
3. When one is damned and thus spends eternity in hell it is all _____ .
4. To reach heaven or hell, one must _____ .

We have discussed “reaching the destination” on a “macro” level in terms of election. Now, let’s look at it on a more “micro” level as to each individual (from the aspect that we each experience).

Getting to Heaven

Note: For these questions there are many more verses that could be looked up as the Scripture teaches these things consistently. In the interest of time, only a few examples are given.

1. Read Exodus 33:20, Leviticus 19:2, Isaiah 66:24, St. Matthew 5:48, and Romans 1:18. What truth do we draw from these verses?
2. Read Psalm 130:3, Isaiah 64:6, Romans 3:11-13/Psalm 53:3 Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1, 3, and James 2:10. What sobering truth do we come to from these verses?

In summary: _____ deserves to go to hell.

3. What is our hope then? Read Joel 2:13, St. John 1:29, St. John 19:30, Romans 5:8, Romans 6:23, and Ephesians 2:4-9.

Jesus took our _____ as the one time perfect sacrifice for sins. We receive this forgiveness (His righteousness becomes ours) by _____ through _____.

4. But what of good works? Are they required to enter heaven? See St. Matthew 25:31-46, 2 Corinthians 5:10. How are we to understand this?

Put simply, one gets to heaven through Jesus. There is no other way (see St. John 14:6) because it is only in Jesus that our sins can 100% be washed away. We cannot save ourselves. Other people cannot save us. It is only through Jesus as the perfect law-keeping God-man who died and rose again that we may live. When one receives the gift of faith by the Holy Spirit working through the means of grace, their eternal destination is heaven.

5. There is _____ we can do to enter heaven. It is only through what God has done for us and His showing of mercy to us that we may reach heaven. In His timing, our physical lives on earth will end and He will call us to our eternal home, carried there by His angels.

FOR THE REST OF THE QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 2 PLEASE ACCESS THE SERMON PAGE WHERE THAT RECORDING IS FOUND.