

Lighthouse Bible Church

July 28th, 2013

John 8: 21 – 30 *Scripture reading Luke 18: 9 - 14*

‘Will you die in your sin?’

Stand – Read – Pray

The central theme of this passage and what we have seen in the book of John so far is what someone believes about Jesus and the consequences of that belief or unbelief.

Jesus has been very clear in His actions and His teaching about who He is. The writer John has been very clear about who Jesus is. John the Baptist has been very clear about who Jesus is. The Samaritans testimony is very clear about who Jesus is and the Old Testament scriptures have been very clear about who Jesus is.

Everyone who has ever heard Jesus teach or seen the signs and miracles Jesus did have all the evidence they need to conclude that He is the Messiah, the Christ, God in human form.

It is the same way with people today; they have the testimony of creation **Romans 1: 18 – 20** says, as to who God and Christ are. They have the witness of their own conscience as **Romans 1: 19 & 2: 15** as to who they are. They have the entire revealed Word of God, Old and New Testament to reveal who God and Christ are. They have evangelists and Pastors and teachers to tell them who Christ is.

They, like the people to whom Jesus is talking, must make a decision about Jesus and who He is.

And what you believe about Jesus will have eternal, everlasting consequences. Because as Verse 24 says ‘if you do not believe that I am He **you will** (what) **die in your sins**’.

That is the bottom line; on the day that you die will you die having had your sins forgiven or will you die in your sins? Jesus, in our passage, is talking to a group of people, the religious hypocritical Pharisees, who have rejected Him for who He is and He has pronounced to them that when they die they will die in their sins, because of the rejection of Him. What a frightening thing to hear.

Because if one dies in their sin, having never received forgiveness because they never repented and put their faith and trust in Jesus and His finished work on the cross, they will live forever in pain and torment, right. So this passage is a warning as much as anything to all who hear, even today. And this passage is the tragic result of those who reject Jesus because they will die in their sin. So let’s see how this unfolds starting in Verse 21.

Verse 21: then Jesus said to them again, I am going away and you will seek Me and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.

So Jesus starts out by telling them where He is going. He says **I am going away** and we know where **away** is, we know where He is going. He had told them earlier in **John 7: 33 I shall be with you a little while longer and then I am going back to Him who sent Me.** He is going back to the Father in heaven. Remember what **John 14: 2 – 3** say. **In My Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you, I GO TO prepare a place for you...**

The way Jesus will go away, we know as well. It will be through His arrest, mock trials, torture, crucifixion, death, burial and then His resurrection and ascension to heaven. All that they had heard was that He is going back to His Father.

Jesus says **you will seek Me and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.** He says I am going back to heaven and you can't go there, ever, because you have chosen to reject Me and not believe Me for who I am, you **cannot come** because when you die, you will **die in your sin** and no sin can ever enter heaven. It will be too late for you. He is in essence pronouncing judgment on their unbelief and rejection.

It is the same for people today. 150,000 people die every day and how many of them die in their sin and go to the place of eternal fire, weeping and gnashing of teeth, outer darkness, eternal torment. What a horrible fate awaits all those who reject Jesus. The inevitable consequence of unbelief is to die in your unforgiven sin.

John wrote this book **John 20: 31** says **so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in His name.** But when you don't believe, when you reject the clear revelation of who Jesus is and you die, you will die in unforgiven, unatoned for sin. Look at the Jews response in Verse 22.

Verse 22: so the Jews said 'will He kill Himself, because He says 'where I go you cannot come'.

He said a similar thing to them back in **John 7: 33 – 34** *read* and look at their response in Verse 35. So there they are thinking, because of what He said, that He is going to another place to teach others. But notice what they say this time when He tells them the same thing.

Will He kill Himself? Why would they say that? It is because for a person to **kill themselves** would be in the mind of the Jews, the worst possible sin that could be committed. Their belief was that if you committed suicide you went to the worst part of hell.

Josephus, a Jewish historian near the time of Christ, said this ‘the souls of those whose hands have acted madly against themselves are received by the darkest place in Hades’ (*The Wars of the Jews iii.vii5*)

So what they are saying is ‘if He is going to the place we cannot go and we know that we are going to heaven, then He must be going to kill Himself and go to the darkest place in Hades because that is the opposite place where we are going’. ‘He must be going to hell because we are going to heaven’. Wow.

That is what these self-righteous, self-satisfied, self-forgiven hypocritical religious people thought. They were in and He was out. O He was going to die alright and He was going to give Himself in death but not in an act of suicide, not by His own hands, but by the hands of those who are now mocking Him, it would be an act of love and He would, in essence, be the victim of murder. **Acts 2: 22 – 23** says **He was delivered by the determined purpose of God but you have taken Him by lawless hands and crucified Him and put Him to death.** It was murder not suicide.

It is hard to reach those kinds of people who are so self-satisfied in their religion and their religious routines and their works righteousness system of religion that believes they are going to heaven no matter what Jesus or anyone else says.

They are like what **Proverbs 12: 15** says **the way of the fool is right in his own eyes**, even when it comes to their religious beliefs. In **Luke 16: 14 – 16** it says **now the Pharisees who were lovers of money also hear all these things and they derided Him and He said to them you are those who JUSTIFY YOURSELVES before men but God knows your hearts for what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.**

These self righteous religious leaders are the ones that Paul described in **Romans 10: 1 – 3** when he says that his prayer for them is that they would be **saved** and then he describes what they are like. He says **I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge for they being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own righteousness have not submitted to the righteousness of God.**

And we still have them today. Those who mock Jesus, make jokes about Jesus, laugh at their sin and everyone else's sin as if it doesn't matter. They never admit their sin and their need for Jesus. They trust in their own goodness, their own works their own religion and believe they are going to heaven because of it.

The Melbourne paper after one of the people had heard Billy Graham preach. This is what he said, "After hearing Dr. Billy Graham on the air, viewing him on television and seeing reports and letters concerning his mission I am hardly sick of the type of religion that insists my soul and every one else's needs saving, whatever that means. I have never felt that I was lost nor do I feel I daily wallow in the mire of sin, although repetitious preaching insists that I do. Give me a practical religion that teaches gentleness and tolerance, that acknowledges no barriers of color or creed, that remembers the aged and teaches children goodness and not sin. If in order to save my soul I must accept such a philosophy as I have recently heard preached I prefer to remain forever damned. *GTY Mac on John*

He, like many people in Jesus day and in our day, have in their own mind developed a system in which they believe they are self-righteous and in that self-righteousness they, without fear, mock the truth, because they believe they are righteous before God. So Jesus says to them in Verse 23

Verse 23: and He said to them you are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

Jesus says ‘on the contrary, it is you who are from Hades, from beneath, not Me, I am from heaven. He knew that is exactly what they meant when they said ‘will He kill Himself and where I go you can not come’. So He is just straightening them out on what is right. They are the ones from hell and He is from heaven above.

Jesus isn't saying they came from beneath, from Hades, from hell. He is saying that because of their unbelief, because of their hypocrisy, because of their false religion of human achievement and their ignorance, they are living according to the system, the standard promoted by hell and its ruler Satan.

Every unbeliever in this world, even today, is from beneath, in the sense that they are living according to the ruler of this world and this world's evil system, right. Isn't that what **Ephesians 2: 1 – 3** *Read*. Look at **John 8: 44** *Read* Every unbeliever is influenced and controlled to one degree or another by their father the devil and his evil world system. That is why **1st John 2: 15 – 17** says **do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but of the world.**

Conversely, every believer in this world is from above, right. **Ephesians 2: 6** says that **we have been raised up together, with Christ, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3: 20 says our citizenship is (where) in heaven. Galatians 1: 4 says Jesus gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age...**

So everyone of us is either connected with heaven or hell, connected from above or beneath, depending on who you believe and what you believe and who you identify with. Is it with the world and the world system and the world's religions or is it with Christ as the only way to heaven, independent of ourselves.

It is like what **1st John 5: 19** says **we know that we are of God And the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.** And because every unbeliever is from beneath and a part of this worlds evil system controlled and influenced and swayed by the wicked one, Jesus says what He does in Verse 24.

Verse 24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.

Jesus says ‘therefore’, because of this, which takes us back to what He has just said about them being from beneath, you will die in your sins. You will die in your sins because you:

Don't believe in Me as the Messiah, the Christ, God in human form
Believe that you are, in your own righteousness, good enough to please God
Are trusting in your own goodness and good works to get you to heaven
Believe that your religion of human achievement is sufficient for salvation
Don't believe the simple gospel of salvation.

Jesus says you will die in your sin if you do not believe, as He has said several times already, that He is who He claims to be, who the Father tells us He is, who the scriptures affirm He is, and that is the Son of God. You won't go to hell for being a murderer or a thief or a rapist or a robber or a liar or whatever, you will go to hell because you choose not to believe in Jesus that may manifest itself in any of those ways. Hell is for anyone and everyone who refuses Christ.

Jesus says **you will die in your sin if you do not believe that I am *He*.** Your version will probably have the He in italics. *Explain italics usage.* Why is the ‘I am’ so important? Because Jesus is identifying Himself as the I am of scripture.

Back in **Exodus 3: 14** when Moses was at the burning bush he asked God what His name was; and what did God say **I am who I am ... thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.**

Jesus says ‘if you do not believe that **I AM**’. In the Greek language that the N.T. was written in, the words I am are *ego eimi*. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew. 70 Greek scholars got together and translated the Old Testament Hebrew into the Greek language and they call it the Septuigant, which means 70. LXX.

In the passage in Exodus 3: 14 where God says I am, it is also, in the Septuigant, *ego eimi*. The implications of that, which the Jews and Pharisees understood very well, was that Jesus is saying that He is the God of the Old Testament, He is the I AM, Yahweh, God.

We are going to see later in **John 8: 58 – 59** Jesus say **most assuredly I say to you before Abraham was I AM. Ego eimi.** And what was their reaction there? Verse 59 says **they took up stones to throw at Him.**

He says you will die in your sins because you don't believe that I am. You will die in your sins if you believe in Jesus, if He is not the Jesus of the Bible. If He is the Jesus of your own making; the one of Love and tolerance and forgiveness and He wouldn't do anything like that, kind of Jesus, you will die in your sins.

If you want to know Jesus and know who He is, He is best revealed right here in His word. Do a study some time on just the words in the N.T. I am that Jesus says and see what He says about Himself and who He is. You will have enough information to know who He is. And so the Pharisees say to Him in Verse 25.

Verse 25: then they said to Him ‘who are You? And Jesus said to them ‘just what I have been saying to you from the beginning.

These Pharisees, once again, display their ignorant, hard hearted unbelief by asking Jesus 'who are you'? He had already told them who He was from the beginning of His ministry and over and over again. They could be asking Him this because they want Him to be more specific so they can accuse Him of blaspheme, saying that He is God.

Or they could be saying it like: who do you think you are telling us that we are from beneath and going to die in our sins. We are the religious leaders of Israel, we know God, and you're not Him, you're that carpenter from Nazareth.

He doesn't tell them specifically who He is because they had enough information with what He had been telling them since He began His teaching ministry that they should have known. So He says to them in Verse 26

Verse 26 I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.

Jesus says to them I have more to say to you, not about Me because you haven't listened so far, but about you, but not right now. I could expose all of your iniquities; your pride, your ambition, your hypocrisy, your false religion, your hatred of the light and your malice of the truth and the unbelief of your hearts so that you would know very clearly why I tell you that you will die in your sins ... but not now.

I could say more but I have already said enough for you to know that **I speak only those things which I hear from My Father and My Father, who sent Me, is true.** I'm not speaking from Myself but the truth of Him who sent Me for all the world to hear, but you won't listen. The next time I speak to you it will be in judgment because ignorance, unbelief and self-righteousness brings judgment and it is no different than today. Then it says in Verse 27

Verse 27 They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father

They still refused to believe that Jesus came from the Father, is going back to the Father, that the Father is in Him and that He speaks only what the Father tells Him.

They didn't understand that because they couldn't understand that in their unbelief.

1st Corinthians 2: 14 but the natural man, the unbeliever, the self-righteous, does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.

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Introduction and Review:

Romans 1: 18 – 20, Romans 1: 19, 2: 15

Verse 21:

John 7: 33, John 14: 2 – 3, John 20: 31

Verse 22:

John 7: 33 – 34, Acts 2: 22 – 23
Proverbs 12: 15, Luke 16: 14 – 16
Romans 10: 1 – 3

Verse 23:

Ephesians 2: 1 – 3, John 8: 44
1st John 2: 15 – 17, 5: 19, Ephesians 2: 6
Philippians 3: 20, Galatians 1: 4

Verse 24:

Exodus 3: 14, John 8: 58 – 59

Verse 25 – 27:

1st Corinthians 2: 14

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