

West End Messenger

January – February 2021



This Bible study devotional is provided to you for free by the **West End Church Of Christ**, assembling at 987 West Main Street in Newark, OH – for your spiritual education and encouragement. If we can help you seek God, please contact us at 740-344-7954 or at www.thewestendchurch.org.

Inside This Issue:

Article 1: As To The Lord

Article 2: What Are Spiritual Blessings?

Article 3: Why Doesn't God Answer My Prayers?

Article 4: The Heavens Declare The Glory Of God

Article 5: Why Are There So Many Different Interpretations Of The Bible?

Article 6: Is True Faith Blind?

Article 7: What Is Hades?

Article 8: Soon To Be Burned

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Article 1

As To The Lord

Colossians 3:22-25 contains the following instructions to Christian slaves and includes an important principle that will help us all in our relationships. “Slaves, obey your human masters in everything. Don’t work only while being watched, as people-pleasers, but work wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong he has done, and there is no favoritism.” I want you to consider the power of the “as to the Lord” principle in how you interact with others.

1) Your conduct must not be based on others. There may be many times that you have the responsibility and the opportunity to do good to another person, but that person does not treat you well. Maybe it is your employer. Maybe it is a coworker. Maybe it is a classmate. Maybe it is a neighbor. Maybe it is a relative. Maybe it is a spouse. Maybe it is a brother or sister in Christ. Regardless, the Bible gives you the responsibility to do good to everyone as you have opportunity (Galatians 6:10). Still, it can be difficult to do good to someone who treats you poorly. Yet, Colossians 3:22-25 helps you recognize that the standard of your conduct is *not* based on how others treat you.

2) Your conduct must be as if you are doing the thing to the Lord. Regardless of the specifics of your situation, your focus in doing good to others must be to treat them in the same way you would treat the Lord. So, your actions are not based on the merits of the sinful people you interact with and may have hurt you in the past. Instead, your actions toward others are based on the merits of Jesus Christ, who loved you enough to give His life on the cross so that you can be saved from the eternal consequences of your sin! Every way that you interact with others must be how you would treat and speak with such a loving Savior. Certainly, you

would only want to act in a way that is loving toward such a one as He!

3) The Judgment Day scene. I want you to consider that this “as to the Lord” principle goes much further than the slave and master relationship by observing what Jesus taught in Matthew 25:31-46 about the Judgment Day. On this Day when Jesus Christ returns with all the holy angels with Him, all nations will be gathered before Him and He will separate them like a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. Those on His right hand will be those who have been faithful to the Lord and will be rewarded with eternal life in Heaven. These, Jesus said are the ones who gave the hungry food, gave the thirsty drink, took in the stranger, clothed the naked, cared for the sick, and visited the one in prison. Those on the left hand will be those who did *not* do these things and will be punished with eternal punishment in Hell. But, the real power of the point is that Jesus indicates those who did all of the things for others did them to Him – and those who failed to do them failed to do them to Jesus!

Everything you do or do not do to someone else is the same as either doing or not doing a thing to Jesus Christ. Therefore, no matter what people have done to you in the past that can make it difficult to do good things to them, you must treat them as you would treat the Lord. For, one Day, your eternity will hang in the balance and, in part, be dependent on whether you have treated people in the same kind of loving way you would treat the Lord! So, make sure that you do everything “as something done for the Lord and not for people.”

Article 2

What Are Spiritual Blessings?

God gives many physical blessings to people on this earth (i.e. food, clothing, family, health, etc.). These are all things that relate only to your physical life and wellbeing. However, the Bible identifies that God blesses some people in a spiritual way. While

many people understand physical blessings when they see them, they may completely miss out on the spiritual blessings God has provided because they cannot see them. So, we need to learn about spiritual blessings.

1) Dependent on a right relationship with God. God blesses every person on this earth with physical things (Matthew 5:45). He does so regardless of whether they choose to believe in and obey Him or not. However, this is not the case with spiritual blessings. They can only be experienced by certain people. Ephesians 1:3 says, “Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ.” Only those who have come to God through Jesus Christ by faith and obedience to His commandments have the spiritual blessings! All others are spiritually dead and missing out on these blessings.

2) Connected with your spiritual wellbeing and eternal things. Although physical blessings relate to a person’s wellbeing and life on this earth, such things are only temporary. Many of them ruin over time. And, they all end at death. However, spiritual blessings are related to an entirely different aspect of your existence. They focus on your spiritual wellbeing so as to help you live faithfully for God and overcome the trials of life. And, they are rooted in things that are eternal rather than things that are temporary. For example, Romans 5:1-2 says, “Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have also obtained access through him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” The peace, joy, and hope we experience through Jesus are all spiritually-focused and attached to God’s promise of eternal salvation!

3) Cannot be taken from you. Physical blessings are fleeting. So, although it is good to enjoy them in ways that please God (Ecclesiastes 2:24-25), seeking true purpose, joy, and fulfillment through them is something you will never achieve and is like trying to catch the wind (Ecclesiastes 1-2)! However, this is not the case with spiritual blessings. Jesus summarized the difference

well in Matthew 6:19-21. “Don’t store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Nothing and no one can take away your spiritual blessings (Romans 8:31-39). The only way you can lose them is if you turn away from God and go back into sin (Galatians 5:4)!

4) Examples. What are the spiritual blessings God has made available to those who are in Christ? Peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:6-7). Joy that is not dependent on your earthly circumstances (Philippians 4:4). Hope of eternal salvation in Heaven that serves as an anchor for the soul (Hebrews 6:19). Adoption as children of God (Ephesians 1:5-6). A spiritual family that supports and helps us on our way to Heaven (Matthew 19:29). The powerful avenue of prayer to come before the throne of God and have assurance that God hears our prayers (1 Peter 3:12). Forgiveness of all the sins that have been committed against God so that there is no longer any record of their charge (Ephesians 1:7).

Spiritual blessings are far greater than physical blessings! In this way, even those who may not have many physical blessings are truly rich if they are in Jesus Christ. And, those who may have many physical blessings are truly poor if they are without Jesus Christ. Therefore, rather than gauging success in your life by physical blessings, gauge it by your spiritual blessings!

Article 3

Why Doesn't God Answer My Prayers?

Most religious people recognize prayer as an important part of their faith. And, they recognize that prayer allows individuals the opportunity to make requests of God. In fact, Jesus said, “Ask, and it will be given to you” (Matthew 7:7). People can become disillusioned, then, when they ask God for something in prayer –

and it doesn't seem to happen. Some will even give up their faith. However, the Bible gives some principles we must consider in this situation.

1) God doesn't always answer according to your time and ideas. Sometimes people think God isn't answering their prayers when they really just haven't waited long enough. For, God doesn't just know *how* to answer your prayers; but also *when* to answer them! As Psalm 27:14 says, "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart be courageous. Wait for the Lord." You must remember that God is eternal and is not confined by time the way we are. Therefore, God is patient to bring things about just as He desires! Then, we must also be open-minded to how God answers our prayers. For, there may be times when God gives us the answer to prayer in a completely different way than we considered. As we learn from Isaiah 55:8-9, God's thoughts are not our thoughts, His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts and ways are much higher than ours! Don't put God in the box that you create for Him!

2) God only promises to hear the prayers of the righteous. There may be times when God does not answer your prayers because of something that is wrong with your relationship with Him. For example, James 5:16 illustrates that the promise of powerful prayer is when there is a "righteous person" praying. In fact, 1 Peter 3:12 says that "they eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do what is evil." Yes, having unrepented sin in your life can and will often hinder the power of your prayers (1 Peter 3:7). Therefore, if you believe God is not answering your prayers, it would be good to spend time in self-examination to see whether you are truly in a right relationship with God!

3) Prayer must be offered according to God's will. Even those who live in a right relationship with God will not always have their prayers answered in the way they desire. While there is power in the prayers of the righteous, God will not do what goes against His will. 1 John 5:14-15 says, "This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears whatever we ask, we know that we have what

we have asked of him.” So, we cannot think of God as just some genie who is there to grant our wishes through prayer! Rather, we are taught to humble ourselves in prayer and to ask for God’s will to be done above even our own (Matthew 6:10)! The Scriptures show that even Jesus and the apostle Paul were not granted what they asked for because it was not according to God’s will (Luke 22:42-44; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10). And, we must be careful to seek God’s will in prayer rather than seek things to use on our own will and for our selfish pleasures (James 4:3).

4) Prayer must be offered in faith. Sometimes people are not given what they ask for in prayer because they do not have true faith God will grant it. James 1:5-8 says, “Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God – who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly – and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without doubting. For the doubter is like the surging sea, driven and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord, being double-minded and unstable in all his ways.” Although we may question whether something we ask of God will be according to His will, we should not question whether He will grant it if it is! We must never question whether God cares for us or whether God is powerful enough to grant what we ask. Instead, we must learn to ask in faith, with no doubting!

The reality is that God does not always answer our prayers according to what we may ask. However, there are several possibilities as to why this happens. Whenever you may not receive the answer you have been asking for, take some time to consider why this may be the case. Never allow your faith to waver because your prayers are not answered how you may desire. Instead, use these situations to grow even stronger in faith!

Article 4

The Heavens Declare The Glory Of God

It is essential for every person to consider how this universe began. Unfortunately, some may view this question as an

unnecessarily complex one and think that only the best scientists could possibly know the answer. However, there is a powerful statement made in the Bible about this that is provably true. Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands.” So, this passage claims that any person can know there is a God by observing the wonders in the heavens. Let’s consider three basic points of evidence that backs up this claim.

1) It is impossible for the universe to have originated from nothing. This universe is unfathomably large, with an uncountable number of stars. Yet, many people say that this all came into existence from nothing! At some point, everyone who attempts to explain the origin of this universe through the Big Bang theory or anything similar are faced with the problem of how the first particle began. Many claim that all the matter and energy that now exists and is spread over many billions of light years throughout the universe was all very densely compacted in one single particle billions of years ago. Yet, where did this particle come from? Observable science concludes that within an isolated system, matter and energy cannot be created or destroyed. It can only change forms. This is the first law of thermodynamics that is observable, repeatable, and has never been naturally violated. Therefore, any attempt to explain the origin of the universe naturally is illogical! There must have been a supernatural force in order for the universe to begin!

2) The order and design of the universe cannot be the result of an accident. When you consider how marvelous and complex the universe is, it is unreasonable to conclude that it all evolved accidentally over millions or billions of years, as many suggest. Many people will tell you that after the Big Bang happened, all the matter and energy went hurling through space and began to form the various planets and stars that exist today. All of this, though, violates the second law of thermodynamics, that states things will move toward disorder rather than order. You simply cannot get tremendous design from chaos (i.e. an explosion). Then, as you specifically consider the earth, the moon,

and the sun and what we can know about their design and why they are capable of supporting life, the chances are too great to reasonably conclude that everything could have just accidentally formed in this exact way so life could be supported. There are too many variables that had to happen in the exact way they happened (i.e. the distance between the earth and the sun, the distance between the earth and the moon, the tilt of the earth on its axis, the atmosphere of the earth, etc.). Even slight changes would make the earth uninhabitable.

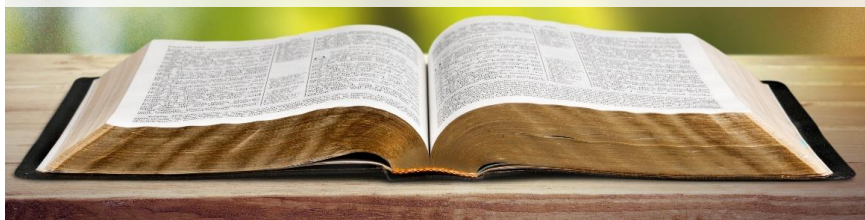
3) Design in the universe shows there is a great Designer.

Looking into the universe, seeing that it exists and its great design and order disproves the natural explanations that are commonly offered concerning its origin today. Instead, the only logical conclusion you can reach is that there must be a God! For, just as seeing a poem reveals there was a poet, seeing a building reveals there was an architect, seeing an automobile reveals there was an engineer, and seeing a book reveals there was an author, seeing the design in the universe reveals there is a Designer responsible for it all! It is all too marvelous, too complex, and too orderly to have spontaneously sprung into existence or to have happened by random chance! And, the more you consider the tremendous design in the universe, the more you will recognize that the God who created it all is truly very great and powerful! In fact, He is the all-powerful and eternal God (Romans 1:19-21)!

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1). You can know without any doubt that God really does exist. There is no other reasonable explanation for everything you can observe in this universe! May your faith be in Him and may you always glorify Him in your life!

Tired of religious confusion?

Try simple, New Testament Christianity



Worship with the West End church of Christ

987 West Main Street, Newark, OH 43055

Sundays

9:45a Bible study*

10:30a Worship

6:00p Worship*

Wednesdays

6:30p Bible study*

***Due to COVID-19, we are only assembling on Sunday mornings at 10:30a at the present time. Check with us for updates.**

Connect with us

Website: thewestendchurch.org

Facebook: West End church of Christ

Phone: 740-344-7954

Email: preacher@thewestendchurch.org

Located outside Licking County? Contact us and we'll help you find a local church closer to your community!



Watch for a new episode every week

Find on the web @

www.thewestendchurch.org/bibletalk

Also available on



Have a Bible question you'd like answered?

Would you like to hear a Bible discussion on a particular subject?

Call or email:

740-344-7954

Email preacher@thewestendchurch.org

Have a Bible study resolution for 2021?

Try these two Bible studies!

Need help with making spiritual resolutions?

Try this two-lesson Bible study

Lesson 1: Resolving To Follow The Lord

Lesson 2: Resolutions For A Better You

Want to establish a strong spiritual foundation?

Try this eight-lesson Bible study

“Answers To Life’s Most Essential Questions”

Lesson 1: Who Is God?

Lesson 2: Where Are We Going And Why Are We Here?

Lesson 3: What Is The Bible?

Lesson 4: What Is Sin?

Lesson 5: Who Is Jesus?

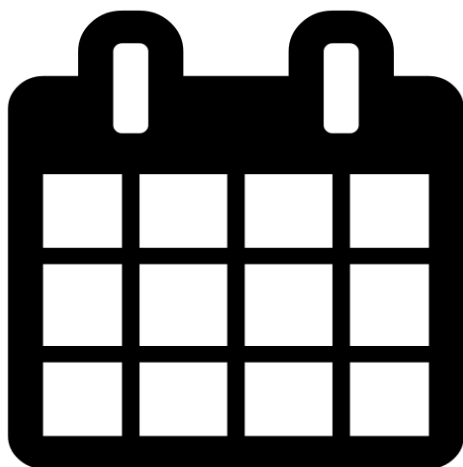
Lesson 6: What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Lesson 7: What Is The Church?

Lesson 8: What Does God Expect Of Me?

Request these two Bible studies today!

Call 740-344-7954 or email
preacher@thewestendchurch.org to receive these lessons
in the mail for free.



FREE

Bible Study Of The Month

(Mailed to your home)

Sign up and get started today:

740-344-7954

www.thewestendchurch.org/biblestudy

preacher@thewestendchurch.org

Article 5

Why Are There So Many Different Interpretations Of The Bible?

Have you ever become frustrated by the large number of people who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ, but yet most of them do not seem to agree about what the Bible teaches? Because of the different ways people interpret the Bible, there have been many religious divisions that have occurred and the result is several thousands of different denominations of churches that believe, teach, and practice different things. But, we have to consider whether God intended for His words to be given so many different interpretations.

1) It is not because of some fault in God's revelation. The words of God contained in the pages of the Bible are perfect because they come from a perfect God. Psalm 19:7 says, "The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise." The words God has revealed through His Holy Spirit in the pages of the Bible do not teach conflicting things. Rather, God has provided everything we need for unity by giving a united revelation. Ephesians 4:1-6 demonstrates this to be so.

"Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to live worthy of the calling you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope at your calling – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."

2) It is because Satan is a deceiver. The primary characteristic of Satan is that he is a liar! This is the first thing we see Satan doing in Genesis 3, when he questioned God by telling Eve that she would not die if she took of the forbidden fruit (verses 1-7). Jesus also called attention to this characteristic of Satan in

John 8:44, when He said Satan “does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Whenever you consider Satan’s lies, you must not just think about things that should clearly be recognized as evil. Instead, recognize that Satan is very subtle in his lies and deceptions – and even uses Scripture to spread his deceptions! For example, one of the times Satan tempted Jesus involved Satan quoting and misapplying Scripture (Matthew 4:5-7). God even warns us that Satan “disguises himself as an angel of light” and that it should be “no great surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). So, Satan and his servants can make themselves look like wolves in sheep’s clothing by appearing to be “Christians” and use the Bible to keep people enslaved to sin (Matthew 7:15-20; 2 Peter 2:1-3)!

3) Many people twist the Scriptures. Satan is not alone in his work of spreading religious lies that appear to be based in the Bible. In fact, he has many associates. Some of these are false teachers and church leaders. God has warned about such people in Romans 16:17-18 when he said, “Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who create divisions and obstacles contrary to the teaching that you learned. Avoid them, because such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites. They deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting with smooth talk and flattering words.” Whether knowingly or unknowingly, there are many false teachers and church leaders who help Satan keep religious people enslaved to sin rather than helping them find salvation through Jesus Christ!

Ultimately, every person who desires to seek God is responsible for himself/herself to make sure he/she comes to an accurate understanding of the Scriptures. 2 Peter 3:16-17 says, “He [Paul] speaks about these things in all his letters. There are some matters that are hard to understand. The untaught and unstable will twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures. Therefore, dear friends, since you know this

in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stable position.”

There are many different interpretations of the Bible today. However, all of these different interpretations do not come from God! Rather, God has only revealed one truth. Satan has worked to spread the many religious lies that exist today through many different people. Therefore, you must be diligent to study the Scriptures and find the truth for yourself!

Article 6

Is True Faith Blind?

Many people misunderstand the nature of true faith. Some unbelievers scoff at faith because they see it as detached from facts. Some people who profess Christianity hide behind the idea of faith and don't care whether there is any evidence that supports their faith. However, the reality is that true faith is not blind. It has real evidence based on absolute facts and logical conclusions.

1) God gives evidence to establish true faith. The foundation of Christian faith includes the reality of God, the Bible as the true words of God, and Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Although there are many other components of the Christian faith, they all tie back to these foundational elements. So, while walking by faith rather than by sight is required of Christians, this does not mean God has not given us any way to know whether the foundation of that faith is sure! In fact, the Scriptures routinely demonstrate the fact that God has given evidence for all these things that can be tested and verified to know they are true!

2) Evidence for the reality of God. Romans 1:19-20 says, “since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse.” Notice that God has “shown” what can be known about Him. One way He has done this

is through the evidence He has left throughout the universe. The design in the universe reveals there was an all-powerful God who created it all. So, science actually proves the existence of God rather than disproves Him. For, all the wonders and order of the universe could not have possibly come into existence from nothing!

3) Evidence for the Bible as the word of God. 2 Peter 1:20-21 says, “Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” Notice that you can “know” whether Scripture comes from God or whether it is from a human author. Prophecy is one of the strongest evidences for Scripture being God’s word. For, it is impossible that people can make hundreds of predictions about the future that are always right and never wrong! Yet, that is exactly what has happened with the Bible – with over 300 separate prophecies made and fulfilled just about Jesus! God is the only logical explanation of how this could happen.

4) Evidence for Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Luke 1:1-4 says, “Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us. It also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed.” Notice how you can “know the certainty” about the things written concerning Jesus. The life of Jesus is confirmed through many eyewitness accounts that have been “carefully investigated.” Particularly, the fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead is backed by many eyewitnesses (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)! And, many of those who witnessed Jesus perform miracles, fulfill prophecy, and as having risen from the dead were so convinced they were willing to suffer and die for Christ!

While faith is crucial to following Jesus and does not require sight (2 Corinthians 5:7; John 20:29; Hebrews 11:1), the foundation for the Christian’s faith is not blind! Instead, true Christian faith

examines the mountain of evidence God has provided (including much more than discussed here) and bases trust in God's promises on this evidence that God is real, the Bible is the word of God, and Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Having this concrete evidence, Christians can "give a defense to anyone who asks" for a "reason for the hope" that is in us (2 Peter 3:15) rather than just attribute our hope to a blind faith!

Article 7

What Is Hades?

What is Hades? The Bible makes reference to a place called "Hades" in the New Testament, as well as a place called "Sheol" in the Old Testament. But, many people are confused about what this place is and what it is not. Although we have not been given a lot of information on the subject, we have been given enough information to make some definite conclusions. So, let's consider what the Bible teaches about this place called "Hades."

1) What Hades is not. There are some things people have thought and taught about Hades that do not accurately represent the Bible's teachings on the subject. For one, some believe Hades is the same place as Hell. However, although some translations have mistranslated the word for Hades as Hell, the Bible shows that Hell is an eternal place and Hades is not. Next, some believe Hades is purgatory. However, the Bible never teaches that one who is punished in Hades will be able to enter Heaven later, as Purgatory would suggest.

2) Hades is the realm of the dead. The Bible demonstrates that Hades is the spiritual realm in which those who have died exist today (and where we will go if we die before Jesus returns). And, we should note that it is a realm of conscious spiritual existence after death.

For example, Luke 16:19-31 records Jesus's teaching about two people and this place, showing that they both went to Hades after they died. Second, we notice that both Jesus and the one

repentant thief on the cross went to Paradise in Hades when they died. Luke 23:43 records Jesus telling the thief, “today, you will be with me in paradise.” Then, Acts 2:27, 31 says that Jesus was not “abandoned in Hades.” So, this “Paradise” was in Hades.

3) Hades has two sections. Luke 16:22-23 provides the details of Hades in the passage about the rich man and Lazarus. “One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side.”

One section of Hades is a place of paradise. This is where Jesus, the repentant thief, and Lazarus went when they each died. It is said to be a place of “comfort” (Luke 16:25) and called “Abraham’s side.” The other section is a place of torment. This is where the rich man went when he died. Luke 16:24 shows him pleading for mercy and desiring a drop of water to be put on his tongue because he was “in agony in this flame” – and even this small relief was not granted to him. Then, between the two sections of Hades, there is a “great chasm” that has been fixed so no one can pass from one side to the other (Luke 16:26). Finally, no one can leave Hades before the resurrection happens (Luke 16:27-31).

4) Hades will be destroyed. Hades is a temporary place and will be destroyed on the great Judgment Day when Jesus Christ returns for the final judgment of all people who have ever lived. At this time, there will be a resurrection of the dead (both the righteous and the wicked, John 5:28-29). Then, Hades will be “thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:13-14). Hades will have served its purpose as the temporary realm to hold the souls of those who had died and will no longer be needed. Having been raised, all people will stand before Jesus Christ in Judgment and either be welcomed into eternal life in Heaven or condemned to eternal punishment in Hell (Matthew 25:31-46).

Hades is a temporary place where those who have died continue to exist today. If you die prior to Jesus’ return, you will

also go to Hades. In Hades, there is a place of torment and a place of paradise. When Jesus Christ returns to judge the world, those who are in Hades will be brought out, take part in the Judgment, and go to eternity either in Heaven or Hell.

Article 8

Soon To Be Burned

It is easy to focus on all the pleasures, riches, experiences, relationships, and things about this life. For most people, these things have become what their lives are about. But, in doing so, they neglect the spiritual things that are truly important. However, to determine what is actually the most important about your life on earth, ask yourself whether the thing is soon to be burned.

1) Life on earth is temporary. While many people focus on the physical things about life, everyone knows that death is an unavoidable experience for every person, no matter how much or how little a person has. For example, when Jesus taught a parable about a rich man who focused on his earthly possessions and pleasures, God told this man, “You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared – whose will they be?” (Luke 12:20). No earthly thing we have or enjoy will be available to us after we die. And, even while we live, those things we have and enjoy often do not last (Matthew 6:19). Although we all know this, we often do not live like we are dying.

2) Jesus is coming again. While each person’s life will end at death, there is another event God has promised that will end everything about this world and everything on it. This is the second coming of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 9:27-28 says, “And just as it is appointed for people to die once – and after this, judgment – so also Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.” The second coming of Christ is an event all people are taught to be prepared for, as it will take place at an unexpected (Matthew 24:36, 42-44). When this happens,

every person will be brought into judgment and will be no longer experience life on this earth (Matthew 25:31-46).

3) Everything on this earth will be burned up. While every person (living and dead) will stand before Christ in judgment when He comes again, there is a different fate waiting for the physical things of this earth. 2 Peter 3:7 says that the “present heavens and earth are stored up for fire.” 2 Peter 3:10 says, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed.” 2 Peter 3:12 says that on this day “the heavens will be dissolved with fire and the elements melt with heat.” This means that anything that was precious to you on this earth will ultimately be destroyed in this intense fire from God on the day Jesus returns – if it is not destroyed before!

4) Only your soul will remain. When you die and Jesus returns, you will be separated from everything physical. And, whatever you have had that remains on this earth when Jesus returns will be completely consumed by fire. The only thing that will mean anything is your soul! Your soul will survive physical death, will stand before Jesus in judgment, and will not be destroyed by the fire that will destroy this earth! As Jesus taught in Matthew 6:19-21, if earthly things are considered your treasures, you will be spiritually poor when you stand before Christ. But, if spiritual things are considered your treasures, you will be spiritually rich when you stand before Christ!

Don't let yourself get distracted by all the physical things of this life. Know that none of it will last very long. It is all soon to be burned! Instead of pursuing physical treasures that don't last (whether pleasures, riches, possessions, knowledge, or relationships), pursue spiritual treasures by committing your life to Jesus Christ and living for Him!

Reliable & Easy-To-Understand
BIBLE STUDIES



Sign-up for our free Bible study course!

- Traditional mail
- Email

Get Started Today:

740-344-7954

www.thewestendchurch.org/biblestudy

