

Monthly Study - Starting from the Ending

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[0 : 0 0] And let's have a word of prayer. We thank you, Father, for this meeting that we can share and enjoy. We simply ask that it will be productive and enlightening for each of us and especially honoring to you. We appeal to you for the wisdom and the knowledge that we know we lack, and we ask that as we engage the scriptures, you will provide for us what we need to know. Thank you for your presence with believers all throughout the world. We have no idea how you do that, but that's part of your job description, and we're glad you fulfilled it so well.

Thank you for the presence of each one here. For those unable to be with us, for various reasons, we ask your blessing upon them as well. We commit our time to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Going to take a completely different approach today in all of the years that I have been teaching the Bible, which is 50 plus, I've never approached it from this standpoint, but I guess there's the first time for everything. And we are not going to begin at the beginning, we're going to begin at the end.

So, I would ask you to turn, please, to Revelation chapter 21. Revelation chapter 21, and here we find the description of the new heaven and the new earth. The first heaven and the first earth will have passed away. And John says, I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride, adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and he shall dwell among them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be among them. This is the beginning of a description of what is referred to as the eternal state. It is not to be confused with the millennial reign of Christ. That is a thousand year period that is identified repeatedly in Revelation chapter 20, and we are not going to go there, but what we are going to do is make a rather large assumption, and that is the rapture has already occurred.

Satan has already been defeated because the tribulation period is passed. The seven years of tribulation is passed. Christ has returned for his second coming, and he has established his millennial reign upon the earth for that thousand years. And at the end of the thousand years, this present earth is going to be removed in a way that it will give place to a new heavens and a new earth. That will be the eternal state.

[2 : 5 9] So what we are going to do this morning for this, I guess it would probably just be this one session, we are going to begin at the ending, and then give you some idea as to how we got there. And one reason I'm beginning at the ending is because I'm convinced we are pretty close to it. No, I'm not interested in setting any dates, but as I've often said, we are closer than anybody else has ever been, and indeed we are.

So I want to appeal to the writing of one of my favorites, Dr. Reynold Showers. His name, by the way, is Reynold, not Ronald. It's R-E-N-A-L-D, known by his friends as Rennie. Rennie is now with the Lord.

I want to give you a brief bio of his, and then I am going to do something else that I've never done, and that is share a couple of pages from this book by Dr. Showers, What on Earth is God Doing?

This little volume is the most concise, comprehensive, complete treatment of the subjects involved of anything I have ever seen. There have been massive tomes, several hundred pages in length, that have done a more thorough job, but none of them have done it, I believe, with the succinctness, and yet at the same time the comprehensiveness as Dr. Showers, and What on Earth is God Doing?

He literally goes from creation to the eternal state in just a little over a hundred pages, and I was thinking seriously about getting a quantity of these and maybe just going through it, and one reason I'm starting here at the end of this, at the end of this book, is because I'm not confident that I will be here for the beginning. I'm not confident that you will be here for the beginning. I'm not confident that any of us will be here for the beginning.

[5 : 13] So, having said that, I want to begin with Satan's final attempt, and this is after the millennial reign of Christ, this is after the thousand years have transpired, during which time Satan, the adversary, has been incarcerated, out of action, can have no influence at all on humanity. However, recall if you will, after the second coming, there will be a number of people, a considerable number of people, who will enter the thousand year reign of Christ with the same kind of physical bodies that you and I have.

These will be people who have not been spiritually regenerated, and they do not have a glorified body. They have the same kind of body that you and I have right now, and they will marry, and they will have children, and they will grow to an older age, where the scriptures say the time is coming, when one who dies at a hundred will be thought of as a youngster. In my estimation, that's kind of hearkening back to the pre-fall schedule of life, and of the length of life, which is going to be restored during that one thousand year reign of Christ. But at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ, Satan is going to be loosed.

Now the question that immediately arises is this, why in the world would God release him? He's got him bound for a thousand years, doesn't make any sense to let him out. We don't have any reason to believe that he has been rehabilitated.

He's still got the same kind of psyche, the same kind of desires, and that is to replace the Almighty. And he is true to form, up to his old tricks. And we are told that he goes out to deceive mankind again.

And it will be a number of these descendants who were originally birthed by people with bodies like ours who entered into the millennial period, and they had children, and their children had children, and their children had children, and their children.

[7 : 50] How many people are you going to end up with after a thousand years? A whole bunch of people. These are the people who are going to be the target for Satan when he is released.

He will go out and sow his deception, and apparently he will be as successful as he was in the first case, back in Genesis chapter 3. A number of people will sign on with him, only this time there won't be a battle of Armageddon.

The decisive factor, when these are gathered together to oppose the Lord, he will simply eliminate them with the fire from heaven that will consume them, and that will be the end of that. And then there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and everyone in that will be regenerated people, and there will not be any possibility of rebellion.

Now this is going to evoke a whole host of questions, and Dr. Showers is going to answer many of them, and you'll have opportunity for some comment or question as well. So, we're going to begin dealing with the judgment of the unsaved, because that evokes a lot of questions.

What is hell going to be like, and is the fire literal, or is it figurative, or whatever? We've got more questions about hell than we have answers, that's for sure. But Dr. Showers will have some things to share about that.

[9 : 17] Let me tell you a little bit about this man, first of all. Note, if you will, I've already mentioned that he's been with the Lord now for probably a couple of years. And the article says, Dr. Reynolds Showers was widely recognized as one of the most distinguished theologians in America.

Dr. Showers spent many years as a university professor on the faculties of Lancaster School of the Bible, Moody Bible Institute, Philadelphia College of the Bible, as well as being a visiting lecturer and conference speaker around the world.

He served with the Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry as a speaker, Bible teacher, author of 15 books, and contributing editor for Israel My Glory magazine.

Many of you subscribe to that, and you've seen copies of it. So, I'm just going to begin with the last few pages of what Dr. Showers has shared. Then we'll be opening for comments and questions that you may have.

This begins with the judgment of the unsaved. Now, keep in mind, this is after the millennial reign is over. After Satan's final defeat, all the human members of his kingdom, from all periods of history, will be resurrected from the dead to appear before God's great white throne judgment.

[10 : 42] Since all of these are unsaved, and there is a careful distinction to be made, there will not be any Christians at all at the great white throne judgment.

It is completely for unbelievers. In the same way, there will not be any unbelievers at the award throne of Christ that Paul refers to as the judgment seat of Christ.

That's for Christians only. There won't be any unbelievers. So, those two need to be distinguished between. He continues, Since all of these are unsaved, the purpose of this judgment, great white throne judgment, will be to determine their degree of eternal punishment, not the fact of their lost condition.

Once this judgment is completed, all the unsaved will be cast forever into the lake of fire to suffer eternal torment. Revelation 20, verses 11 through 15.

Thus, Satan's entire kingdom will remain in conscious judgment, totally separated from God for all eternity.

[11 : 53] And I would just remind you by way of injecting here that the most significant thing that will make hell hell is the utter, total absence of God.

That's something to think about. Even the unbeliever today, even the atheist today, has no idea what his existence would be like without the presence of God.

Even though he may not believe in Him, may not have trusted Him, may not acknowledge Him, everyone, every human being is a beneficiary of the presence of God, even though he may not recognize Him nor accept Him.

In other words, this is God's creation, and we are all, believers and unbelievers, are blessed in a very definite way just to be able to live in this world, even though it is a fallen world.

Let me continue. The destruction of death, the heavens, and earth. Before God brings the history of the world to a close by destroying the present heavens and earth, He will abolish death.

[13 : 15] Revelation 20, verse 14. Because death is to be the last enemy of man abolished, abolished, this act of God will be the sign that all the tragic consequences of man's rebellion have been reversed completely through the work of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15, verses 24 through 26. Having crushed Satan and his kingdom forever, having established his own theocratic kingdom on earth, and having reversed the tragic consequences of man's rebellion, God thereby will have demonstrated that he alone is the sovereign God.

With his purpose for the history of this present world accomplished, God will destroy the present heavens and earth which are stained with their record of rebellion, and will create new heavens and a new earth to replace them.

2 Peter chapter 3, verses 10 through 13, and Revelation 21, verse 1. This is the nature of the eternal future state.

All the angelic and human members of the kingdom of God will inhabit the new heavens and new earth in eternity future. They will enjoy the glorious presence and fellowship of God and Christ together with other unspeakable blessings forever.

[14 : 51] One great blessing will be the total absence of sin, death, pain, and sorrow. Never again will there be a rebellion against God and his kingdom.

Now just having shared that with you, I can only imagine a host of questions that have arisen in your mind, and a lot of them are the why question.

So, let's deal with the conclusion, the wrap-up that Dr. Showers has offered, and it consists of two interesting questions, both of them probably on your mind right now.

Says he, the biblical philosophy of history poses at least two questions. The first is this, in light of all the pain and suffering involved in the consequences of rebellion, why did God create his personal subjects with the potential for rebellion?

This is another way of asking why God made angels and men with wills of their own and the ability to choose between obedience and rebellion.

[16 : 07] The Bible does not answer this question. Well, I would take some slight exception with him here because I believe it does, but, well, we'll see when we get there.

Says the Bible does not answer this question. It would seem reasonable to assume, however, that God desired to enjoy fellowship with and receive love and worship from his creatures.

creatures. And I would not disagree with that, but let me just inject something here because if I don't do it now, I'll forget it later. And that is this, God obviously had a desire to engage in fellowship with these creatures that he is going to bring into existence.

That, however, is a far cry from suggesting that God had a need to do such. You really need to understand this because God has no needs, what we would call needs.

God has no needs that he cannot perfectly satisfy in his own being and character and nature. God does not have to go outside of himself in order to realize anything that he wants to realize.

[17 : 33] But God obviously has a desire and I won't ask you to turn there, but we've quoted it a number of times and that's Revelation 4.11 and my understanding of that is that's probably the best explanation of all as to why there is anything rather than nothing.

And that is because the four and twenty elders in Revelation 4 bow down before the Lord and they say, Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive honor and power and glory and dominion.

For or because thou hast created all things and the King James says, and by thy pleasure they were and are created.

So all we can say as to why there is anything rather than nothing is simply because God was pleased out of personal desire not motivated by necessity.

God was never in his being in his perfect situation with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit never came to the position of where they would have to admit sure is lonely.

[19 : 00] Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had somebody that we could relate to? Don't think of God in those terms at all. Think of the deity as being utterly fully self-sufficient self-contained.

God doesn't need anything or anybody but God does have a pleasure, a will. It pleases him to do the things that he does.

And because he is pleased, he does them. He doesn't do them because he has to. He doesn't do it because he feels like something is lacking in himself and he has to try to make it up.

None of that nonsense. God is completely self-contained and self... Well, you get my point. Alright, let's continue on. The second question Dr.

Sowers mentions, why does God let the rebellion go on so long? Why couldn't he have demonstrated his sovereignty by crushing Satan as soon as he rebelled?

[20 : 07] Again, the Bible does not give an answer. At least, it doesn't give a direct answer. Perhaps if God had destroyed Satan immediately, other creatures later on would have concluded that the only reason for Satan's failure was that he didn't try the right method, or that he didn't have enough time to execute his plan fully.

So others, thinking that they could do better, might be tempted to try their hand at overthrowing the rule of God, and the kingdom of God would experience one rebellion after another.

In order to avoid any further rebellions, God gives Satan full time to try every means of overthrow possible. Through this painful object lesson, he teaches all his creatures an indelible lesson that no one, no matter how long, how hard, or what methods he tries, can ever overthrow the sovereign rule of God.

All attempts can do nothing except bring agony and defeat. So what we've got in this thing called humanity and human existence is, and I'm going to use an illustration now that is absolutely, totally inadequate.

It does not begin to convey what's taking place, but the illustration I use, I use this because it's one with which we can all identify. I want you to think of a chess board with the major players, what are they, kings, and the lesser, and the rook, and what are the lesser players, and all the rest, and in the game of chess, the object, of course, is to move your piece within the parameters that you are allowed, and move them in such a way that you hem in your opponent and your opponent has no possible moves left.

[22 : 22] They are stalemated. They have been checkmated. They lose, and you win. In a universal kind of way, involving good and evil, and for lack of a better illustration, that is precisely what is taking place.

And the two chess players are God Almighty and Satan, and each one is moving and counter-moving to affect the other.

We see this all the way back in Genesis, and it begins in chapter 3, with God having made the move of creating Adam, Eve, placing them in the garden in an ideal situation.

Along comes the adversary with a counter-move. and that involves the fall. Then God comes along with a counter-move to Satan's counter-move, and that is the promise of a redeemer, the seed.

And you can go through the Bible, and this is essentially what Dr. Showers does, goes through all the Bible, beginning with Cain and Abel and the slaying of Abel by Cain, and all that involves that, including the Egyptian scene, and all of the countries that have overpowered and defeated Israel, and imprisoned Israel, and persecuted Israel.

[23 : 48] This is all part of the plan. It's all part of the great strategic stress game that is going on in the universe. Only we see it in just bits and pieces, and most of the time we're not able to connect the dots or see the connection.

But let me tell you something. There are vital connections, everything is connected. In the same way with everything is connected in the Bible with everything in the Bible, everything else is connected in human history.

There is a law in effect that is called cause and effect, and you cannot function without it. Every effect has a cause, and these are represented in various chess moves.

Satan does this, God counters with that. Satan counters with this, God counters with that. I am convinced that part of these moves are huge. I mean huge. Part of these moves are World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam.

Part of these moves are what is taking place today in the USA. Don't you think for one moment Satan is that Satan is evil.

[25 : 04] That is evil in our world. And no, I'm not blaming the devil for everything, because as you've heard me say over the years, Christians with their old fleshly sin nature can commit crimes and lay the blame at the devil's doorstep that would make him blush.

we don't need Satan in order to be ornery or evil. We can manage that on our own, if you will. But he exacerbates everything. And his principal way of doing it is by deception.

And the principal way he deceives us is with the lie through information that is disseminated from different sources.

Lying information that causes people to believe it and then they act on it. And that produces the chaos that every generation has seen from the time of the beginning.

It is because people act erroneously on false information. Today we call it fake news. They act on false news and they get bad results, bad consequences, because that law of cause and effect is involved.

[26 : 23] So the main thing Satan does, and keep this in mind, Satan doesn't have to do anything so far as actually being involved himself and doing it.

All he has to do is deceive people and they will take it from there. So think of that. And the principal way that he deceives is through the ear gate and the eye gate.

And through the eye gate deceives by, well, Paul said, I would not have known a coveting except the law said thou shalt not coveting.

What would make anybody covet anything? That's what you see. And you say, I would like to have that. I deserve that. I need that.

Or you hear something and it causes you to want to take some action to bring about that which you hear, whether it's some enticing appeal, allurements, or whatever.

[27 : 23] That's the way this thing called evil works. It is his evil and his instigations working in concert with our fallen nature.

And that's a scary proposition. That's what's going on in the world and has been going on for a long time. Let me get back to Dr. Showers. Repeating this, God gives Satan full time to try every means of overthrow possible.

Through this painful object lesson, he teaches all his creatures an indelible lesson that no one, no matter how long, how hard, or what methods he tries, can ever overthrow the sovereign rule of God.

All attempts can do nothing except bring agony and defeat. And here, excuse me, let me share this last paragraph with you, then we'll open it for your questions and comments.

It's entitled Answers to Man's Basic Questions. The biblical philosophy of history provides answers to man's three basic questions.

[28 : 32] Where have we come from? Why are we here? where are we going? In response to the question concerning where we have come from, the Bible answers that we were created by the sovereign, omnipotent God.

Now, let me again, I've got to stop here and inject something. You know what I'm thinking about. There is a human response to this statement, and it is that which is embraced by the majority of the world's population.

And that's evolution. That is Satan's answer to where we came from. That's his counter move. God is created.

Satan's counter move is Charles Darwin. Evolution. Hey, none of this stuff is by accident. this is all contrived.

This is all plotted. It's all planned out. This is the cosmic conflict. Where we have come from, created by the sovereign, omnipotent God.

[29 : 50] That's the biblical answer. That's not the world's answer. Now, if you go with the world's answer, which most people do, and you act on that, which most people will, it opens a Pandora's box that sends people off in an entirely different direction.

Entirely different. For starters, it means if we are a cosmic accident, that's it.

No creator, no purpose, no meaning, no value. except the value you assign to yourself. Life is purposeless.

Life is random. We aren't going anywhere because when we die, that's the end of everything. Can you not see how attractive that could make suicide to a lot of people?

Depending on what they are dealing with and the kind of pain they are confronting, whether physical, intense physical pain or intense emotional pain and being convinced that there is no life after this life, why should I put up with this?

[31 : 06] Why should I go on this way? What's the point in living? It isn't worth it. I'll put a gun to my head. And more and more people are doing that.

that too is all part of the plan. How many times have I told you Satan loves a high body count?

One of his names is Apollyon. Revelation talks about that. The word means destroyer. He is also called the adversary.

And he's given that name because he is adverse to everything God is about. He's the other chess player.

The Bible tells us we are here to know God personally and serve him actively as members and witnesses of his universal kingdom. people. The biblical answer to the third question is twofold.

[32 : 18] First, as a world and a race, we are headed for the ultimate defeat of Satan and his kingdom and the glorious victory of God and his kingdom.

Second, as individuals, we are headed either for eternal blessing or eternal punishment, depending upon the kingdom we belong to.

all of us were born into this world as members of the kingdom of Satan, which has a sentence of divine judgment waiting to be executed against it.

But because Jesus Christ paid the full penalty for our sin, our membership can be transferred to the kingdom of God and all judgment can be removed from us if we will trust him personally to be our savior.

Romans 8.1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. And that's the position of the believer. Since the rule of God, the sovereign king and judge cannot be overthrown, a person would be foolish indeed to neglect so great salvation.

[33 : 36] salvation. So, this memorable little book, only 128 pages of content, and it is very well bibliographed and sourced with references.

The bibliography is excellent and it is just a masterpiece, I think. What on earth is God doing? Satan's conflict with God.

Now, what would you like to share by way of comment or question? Anyone, feel free. Mike.

During the millennium reign of Christ, you referred to people who are part of it, in it, but they're not believers.

Where did they come from? They came from the people who entered the kingdom, who entered the millennial reign of Christ, as survivors of the tribulation period.

[34 : 41] But they were, and they may have even been believers. I'm not sure about this. I need more clarification on this myself. It is entirely possible, and please don't quote me on this because I could very well be wrong, but I am of the impression that there will not be any unbelievers who will enter the millennial reign of Christ.

Now, I want to equivocate that and say I could be wrong. It wouldn't be the first time, but I think Satan's foes are going to be so soundly defeated, and the death toll is going to be enormous.

The blood will flow, and I don't know whether this is literal or whether it's just hyperbole, because the Bible does use hyperbole as a legitimate literary tool. The blood will flow to the horse's bridles, but there will be an enormous onslaught from all of the troops massed in the north in the plain of Esdralin up near the land of Galilee, and they will come south.

The Antichrist will marshal all of his forces there. There will be representative armies gathered there from all over the world, and the end game will be the utter complete destruction of Israel, and they will mass and march to the south, and Jesus Christ will have returned, my estimation, to the remnant of Israel that is stationed in the southern Jordan region that we tend to identify with Petra, thank you, with Petra, and Isaiah talks about that, that's a passage we'll look at later if we get to it, but Isaiah talks about that, and I think it's 64 or 65, something like this, and he prophetically says, who is this that comes from Basra with his garments stained with blood?

And it goes on, and you read that, and it is messianic, and it is Jesus Christ coming from Basra. Basra is one of the principal cities in southern Jordan, and that's where he's going to return to, and he is going to march northward, and you're going to be with him.

[37 : 00] We're all going to be with him. It's going to be incredible. We will not be combatants, but we will be observers, and the conflict is going to take place in the valley of Jehoshaphat, that's also known as the Kidron Valley, and it separates the holy city, from the Mount of Olives.

There is a deep, deep defile between the two. You go down from Jerusalem, down into the Valley of Kidron, across the Brook Kidron, just like Jesus and his disciples did the night he was betrayed, and then you come up the other side, up to the Mount of Olives, and that huge defile is actually part of the African rift, and it goes all the way north, and clear down into Africa, and it's just a huge ditch that is created there.

That's where that valley is that is going to be the place where this carnage will occur. It's also called the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and it's called the Valley of Jezreel.

They're both referred to the same place, and there's where the Brook Kidron is. So, when people enter the millennial reign as survivors, if my theory is correct, and they will all be believers, but they will be regenerated, but they will not have glorified bodies.

When we come back with Christ, we won't be coming in these bodies. We'll come as glorified saints. We'll have the same kind of body that Christ had when he came out of the tomb. But those Gentiles and Jews who survived the tribulation period, if they are all believers, just like you and I are believers today, they are believers without glorified bodies.

[38 : 57] They have been spiritually regenerated, but they're not glorified. And that means these people are going to marry, and they're going to produce children. And the children that will be born of them will be the same as children born to us today.

The time will come when they will be confronted with a decision. Anyway, at the end of a thousand years, if you can extrapolate and estimate how many people you will have after people are reproducing for a thousand years, you're going to have a lot of people.

A lot of people. Because the more people you get, the more people you get. It's multiplication. It is an addition. And the number is going to be huge.

And these are the ones the Antichrist is going to seduce when he is released from the bottomless pit. And all that will prove is that humanity unaided by the Spirit of God is incapable of anything that can please God, is capable only of evil and wretchedness, which is what humanity produces.

And we've seen that all through history. Nature is red in tooth and claw. That's usually referred to the animal kingdom, where animals prey upon one another as the food chain.

[40 : 26] But nature is, humanity is red in tooth and claw too. And as I pointed out, in just the last 12 decades, 12 decades, what's that?

Just 120 years. Just 120 years, that's all. Mankind has succeeded in destroying violently more of his own in those 120 years than we did throughout the entirety of humanity.

Wow. You know what that means? That means we're getting better at this. We're getting better at eliminating one another violently. See what our technology has accomplished?

It has provided more efficient ways of killing people. Isn't that a sad commentary for humanity? Well, that's the truth.

So, who else has a comment or question? Yes? Will there be any death in the millennium? I mean, will anybody die? Or will they just live? Yes, there will be deaths in the millennium.

[41 : 46] And I suspect that most of them will come from, in fact, all of them will come from people who are not glorified. They will be those who are the descendants and the children of those who entered as survivors of the tribulation period.

But they won't live forever. No. Well, Isaiah, I can't put my finger on this passage. Yeah, I'm pretty sure it's Isaiah that says it.

And it's an interesting expression because it says that when a person dies at the age of a hundred, they will be thought of as a child. And my suspicion is there's going to be a reversion back to the identic kind of situation that we had before the fall when Methuselah lived to be, what, 979 years old?

And a lot of people don't think those are real years. Yeah, those are real years. Those are real years. And Adam lived to be 930 years old.

And yeah, those are real years. Well, they're biblical years. And a biblical year is a 360-day year as opposed to 365 because the biblical year operates on the lunar calendar and we operate on the solar calendar and that gives us five and a quarter days difference over the year.

[43 : 09] But yeah, these people are going to be born then, but they're going to live under Edenic-like conditions. And some have posited, and I don't want to get too far afield in this, but some have posited that there was a huge vapor barrier.

I think it was Dr. Whitcomb and Dr. Morris that alluded to this, that before the fall that there was a huge vapor barrier all over the globe. And what it did is it protected humanity from the ultraviolet rays of the sun, which we know today are key ingredients to the aging process and the wrinkling of our skin and other things that all of that brings in.

So the earth is going to be restored in an edemic kind of way. And animals, Isaiah tells us also, the lion will eat straw like an ox.

I don't know if it would be a straw, but maybe hay or vegetation, and you can't feed a lion today anything but raw meat. That's all he's interested in. Because the animals, when Adam and Eve fell and they disobeyed God, everything fell.

I mean, the whole world came crashing down. And nothing has been the same since. Other comments or questions? Yes?

[44 : 39] I thought it was interesting. You said that the great white throne judgment will determine the degree of punishment. And I'm assuming then from that some people are going to be punished a lot worse than others.

Yeah, and I think, and I wasn't prepared to address that specifically, so I don't have a reference off the top of my head. And even those that I do, as I told you before, the older I get, the more these scripture verses move around.

They don't stay put. But our Lord was talking about the principle, the principle of retribution, the principle of reward, and the principle of punishment is all based upon potential and knowledge and performance.

And the principle is he to whom much is given from him shall much be required. And he who knew his master's will and he who did not know his master's will will be beaten with few stripes.

But he who knew his master's will and refused to do it will be beaten by many stripes. And there is the balancing out. Again, and it's tied to information, it's tied to knowledge.

[46 : 09] We're not going to be judged so much for our ignorance as much as for our knowledge and what we did with it. Because God has gifted all of us with this marvelous thing that gets us in so much trouble also, that also brings us so much pleasure.

It's called human volition, the human will, and it is our exercise of that free will God has given us that provides the basis for our accountability.

We are accountable. Some of us are a lot more accountable than others because we know a lot more. Some are relatively unaccountable because they know so little.

and this by the way is the basis for salvation of infants for instance. You can walk through any of our graveyards, especially the older ones, and it's remarkable how many tombstones you read of little children that never made it to their second or third birthday.

They died in childhood. and as in Adam all die, even in Christ shall all be made alive. And they are all under that corporate application of the blood of Christ because when Jesus died on that cross, he made atonement for the sins of every person who ever lived.

[47 : 40] Even the most evil, vile individual who ever lived, Christ died for their sins. That does not mean that they will appropriate it because many of them haven't, but it also provides the basis for God being able to save the most vile, wicked individual who ever lived.

And the only reason he can is because of the efficacious quality of the death of the Son of God. There was no sin so great but what Christ was not able to die for.

And that is, that is, that's the hope of humanity. And it is, well, that's another subject. I don't want to get too far afield. But who else has comment or question?

Anyone? Marvis? Marvis? I've always kind of wondered, okay, once the millennium is over and then we get the new heaven and the new earth, like, what's God going to do this?

Is he going to start another earth and kind of like do this all over again? Or, you know, like, what's next? I have no idea and if I did have, it would be pure speculation.

[48 : 59] I have no idea. I would like to inject one thing, though, and to me, I find more comfort in this than just about anything other than my personal salvation. and this, I don't know where or how this came to me.

There's nothing deep about it, nothing, you know, extraordinary about it, but for me, it just, I don't know, I just find a peacefulness, a contentedness, an assurance in it, and that is this concern about hell, about literal fire, about the description of people being punished forever and ever.

We just can't contemplate that and one reason we can't is because we cannot imagine anyone's sin as being so grave, but you know, really, what a lot of this boils down to, and this too is a thing, an aspect that many have not considered, and that is when people hear the gospel and they refuse to believe and they refuse to accept the salvation that Christ died to provide for them, that not only has a whole host of negative aspects involved, but I want you to realize that in essence, it constitutes one of the greatest insults and slap in the face of God Almighty that could possibly be accomplished, and what it does is it depreciates and demeans the value of the death of Christ on that cross.

You see what I'm saying? You see the connection, and they've counted the blood of the covenant, that's the new covenant, which is the blood of Christ, they've counted the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing, and have done despot to the spirit of grace, the writer of Hebrews tells us, they have done despot, they have despised, and the word in the Hebrew, or the word in the Greek means they look down their nose at in a condescending kind of way.

They look down their nose at the finished work of Christ, unthinkable, that anyone could do something that was prompted by such incredible love and mercy, and for people to disdain that, and devalue that, and deny that, and despise that, it's inconceivable, but I'll tell you what, that is the capability of the depths of the human heart, and it's pretty ugly, it's pretty ugly, and the point to which I was moving is simply this, whatever the state of the redeemed, whatever the state of the unredeemed, wherever they are, whatever they are enduring or suffering or experiencing, whatever it is, whoever they are, good or bad, heaven or hell, in each and every single case, it will be exactly precisely what is appropriate for that person, totally appropriate, and the question that automatically comes to mind then is, appropriate according to whose view of appropriate, well it won't be yours, and it won't be mine, it will be in the view of the only one who is eligible to have an opinion that can be called appropriate, fitting, fitting, that's the word, whatever anybody is experiencing negatively, it will be fitting and appropriate for them, and I am persuaded that even they themselves will have no complaint, nobody is ever going to be suffering whatever it is they're going to be suffering, wherever they're going to be suffering it, for however long they're going to be suffering it, nobody will be able to say,

[53 : 57] I got a raw deal, I don't deserve this, I deserve better than this, I don't have this coming, nobody will have any objection, everybody will be sold on whatever their state is, and they will know it is precisely what they deserve, and they'll have no comeback, and only God is able to do that, and I'm convinced that that's what he's going to do.

Other thoughts or comments? Yes, Chris? about hell, and God not being absent, if God there, so when people who don't know the Lord die now, do they go to hell now, or is hell a place that will be for them after the judgment?

Because isn't there somewhere in the Gospels where a man asked God if he couldn't come back and tell his brother for his life? I'm just wondering if that person was able to communicate with God, would people today be able to die as they were able to communicate with God and tell the final thing and then tell God?

That's a very controversial passage. You're talking about Luke 16 and the rich man and Lazarus, and scholars are divided as to whether this is a parable, which is a story that Jesus simply makes up, and he makes up the story to make a point, and he did this at least 33 times in his teaching.

He made parables, and he always used something that the people were familiar with. A sower went forth to sow, and everybody knew exactly what he was talking about because they knew what sowers were, and they knew how they sowed, and they knew the seed, and all the rest of it.

[55 : 59] And the same with just about everything that he used. He always brought common ordinary things into the illustration because his whole purpose was to communicate.

If you can't communicate, if people cannot or will not understand what you're saying, there is no way that they can provide an intelligent response.

So, everywhere Jesus went, he used parables, he spoke in very plain language, and I would just say this, and I've been on both sides of this.

In my 60 years of teaching the Bible, I've been on both sides of most issues that divide believers through the years, and this is one of them, and I still haven't completely made up my mind, Luke 16.

the reason that some think Luke 16 was not a parable was an actual story, that this guy was real, and Jesus was describing him, is because the names are used.

[57 : 12] Proper names, personal names are used in that parable, and their personal names are not used in any other parable. It is always a person, a man, a woman, or something, but they never identify.

But in this case, it's Abraham and Lazarus, and that causes some to think, this is not a parable, this is an actual account, this is something real that happened, and Jesus is just recounting it.

However, those who believe it was a parable, are convinced because it is smack dab right in the middle of a whole bunch of undeniable parables on either side of it.

And there's no question about them being parables. So it only stands to reason that that rich man and Lazarus parable in Luke 16 fits the genre of a parable, and it is couched with all of these other parables, and it's unlikely that the Lord would have just slipped in something in the midst of all of those parables that wasn't a parable at all, it was a true story.

So the jury's still out. Like I said, I've been on both sides of that issue. But in connection with your statement there, or your question, and now I've waxed to eloquent, I forgot what the question was.

[58 : 29] What was it? The question was, is hell, if someone who's not a believer dies now, do they go to hell now, or is hell that place they go to after?

Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. As best as I understand, what I am convinced the scriptures teach is that what we call hell does not now exist, nor is there any reason for it to.

But Hades does, and Hades is an intermediary state, and when someone dies, the real person, which is not their body, the real person does not cease to exist.

It exists somewhere. It just no longer exists in the body that they had, but it exists somewhere. And our Lord made reference to this when on the cross, and one of the seven last words that he uttered was, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.

And Jesus' spirit, in many respects, is the same as your spirit. It is your real identity. It is who and what you really are on the inside.

[59 : 58] And that's the part of you, when you came to faith in Christ, that's the part of you, and the only part of you, that was actually regenerated. That's the part of you that was saved.

And when you die physically, that part of you exits the body, but nobody sees it leave, because it's immaterial.

It doesn't weigh anything, and it doesn't measure anything, but it's real. It exits your body, and you are absent from the body, and present with the Lord.

Those who do not know Christ are absent from the body also, but they're present somewhere else. And this seems to be the best explanation for Hades.

Hades is a temporary place for unbelievers. And Revelation 19 and 20 talks about and death, which would be, I take it, the whole concept of death.

[61 : 08] Death and Hades delivered up the dead that were in them. And these were spirits of dead people, not bodies, delivered up the dead that is in them, and they will stand before God at the great white throne judgment.

These are all unbelievers. Only unbelievers will be at the great white throne judgment. and all believers will be at the Bema seat, 1 Corinthians 3, the Bema seat or the award throne of Christ.

And that is not to determine their salvation. That's already determined. That's why they're there. It's because they are believers. But it will be to determine their rewards, whether they are gold, silver, and precious stone.

And I don't think they will be that. they're just being used as an illustration. Or wood, hay, and stubble, which is just worthless stuff. Because God who knows the heart and the mind of each individual also knows, and this is really important, God also knows the intent.

God not only knows what you did, he knows why you did it. And a lot of people, a lot of Christians, have done really good things that appear outwardly, but they did it all for the wrong reasons.

[62 : 39] Because as Jesus said, in one of the cases in the Gospels, they did it for the praise of men. And Jesus said, and they got their praise, and that's all the praise they'll get.

They won't get any praise from God. Because they did it with the wrong motive. They didn't do it to please God. They did it to win the accolades of their fellow human beings. All the pats on the back, and the recognition, and the write-ups, and all the rest of it.

God weighs the heart, the intent of the heart. And there's going to be a lot of surprises. And I've often said this about heaven, and I firmly believe it. There's so many things that I don't know about heaven, simply because they're not revealed.

And there's a whole lot of speculation. There's a lot of people that have claimed to have gone there and died and come back and all the rest of it. And you take it all with a grain of salt. But I'm sure of two things.

One of them is there's going to be a lot of surprises. A lot of surprises. And the second is going to be no disappointments.

[63 : 45] Nobody's going to say, oh, shucks. Is this it? Is this all there is? Boy, I'm disappointed. You know, I look for a lot more.

No, listen, when you think in terms of heaven, being as great and as good as God can make it, it's going to exceed everybody's expectation by far.

No disappointments. Just going to be one major wow after another. It's going to be something. Can't wait. Other comments or questions?

Anybody? Marv, I have a thought kind of related to what Chris was asking. So, what you're saying is, you know, when you're absent from the body, you're present with the Lord or not.

God. So, for those who are not Christians who die, they're who they really are, whether you call that their spirit, their soul, or whatever.

[64 : 55] It's, like you said, maybe Hades, a holding place, they're not with God. But they're not really being punished yet.

because that doesn't happen until the judgment. But it is punished because they're not with God, but yet it's not as bad as it's going to get. Does that make sense?

I mean, I mean, I just want to hear it. I got nothing to back me up. It does make sense, but it does make sense. And what you say is tied together with the great white throne judgment because the reason they are at the great white throne judgment is not to determine their eternal state.

That's already determined. That's why they're there. It has something to do with the degree. And there's obviously going to be degrees of punishment in the same sense that there are degrees of behavior.

And this means that serial killers and human butchers and Adolf Hitlers and Idi Amines, they're going to have a different punishment, a different retribution.

[66 : 05] than the average non-Christian individual. And there isn't any way in the world that we can assess who's going to have what. And I'm just so glad it's not my job.

But I'll tell you what, and this is something that kind of blows my mind, we're not going to judge one another, but we are going to judge angels. Are you kidding me?

Well, Paul makes that clear when he writes the Corinthians, know you not that we shall judge angels? Are you serious? What in the world, what in the world would give us the ability, the wisdom to judge angels?

I have no idea. But that's what the text says, we're going to judge angels. And he said that to the Corinthians, and you got to remember the Corinthians were Paul's problem children.

The Corinthians were Paul's spiritual juvenile delinquents. That's what the Corinthians were. And he says, you people are going to judge angels. Boy, that's quite remarkable.

[67 : 10] And in connection with all of this, and whatever it is, in this place called Hades, that will give up the dead for the great white...

Whatever it is, they are experienced there, and I have no idea what it is or to what degree, but I know this, it's appropriate. It's fitting.

It will be right on track. God knows exactly who deserves what. And he's the only one who does.

And he will administer it flawlessly. And there will not be any appeals, or any need for them.

Because perfect, absolute justice, tempered with God's mercy, will be involved. And whatever it is, it will be as it ought to be.

[68 : 13] And this includes anyone, everyone, wherever they are, whatever they are experiencing, it will be absolutely appropriate. And you know, this ought to comfort us regarding the loss of loved ones whom we suspected or knew perhaps by their own testimony, that they were not believers and may have had no use or interest at all in Jesus Christ.

And when the time comes, you will not shed tears over these people. You may now, out of your humanity, but with the realization that those who may very well have been dearly loved ones of yours, they will be on the receiving end of what is totally fitting and appropriate.

And it will be in accordance with God's sense of appropriateness, not ours. And it will be flawless because he's able to do that.

Nobody in hell, nobody in hell is going to be saying, I got a raw deal. God wasn't fair to me. I didn't deserve this. Everybody knows exactly what they're getting is precisely what they deserve.

And they'll have no one to be responsible for but themselves. That affords me a great deal of pleasure and a great deal of comfort. I've sometimes wondered about my biological father.

[69 : 47] whom I never knew. And I still at times wonder whether I'll ever see him again. And my emotion and my attitude is simply I have no idea, I have no reason to believe that he was a believer.

I sure hope he was, but my hoping isn't going to change it if he wasn't. And I just, I don't know whether I'll see him or not. But I know this, if I don't see him and he will not be there, I will be comforted by the fact that whatever it is, wherever he is, is precisely what it ought to be.

And God will comfort us with his sense of oughtness. To me, that's major. That's really big. Yeah, Mike? this situation that you just described, when that time comes where you with the Lord, you no longer wonder about so-and-so.

Is that true? I think that's true, and I think we will, you see, when we have a glorified body, and this is just something that I'm way over my head here because I just have no idea what this is going to be like, but when we have a glorified body, we will immediately possess a value system that is in accord with Christ's, and as he is, so are we, and we shall know as we are known, and we are so ignorant of so many things now, and people who think they are not really ignorant are also arrogant, to add on top of it, they got a double whammy.

We, I sometimes think if we really knew what we don't know, that we ought to know, we'd be embarrassed to tears. Our ignorance is just amazing, really.

[72 : 04] Sometimes, well, embarrassing is a good word. I've been embarrassed by my own ignorance more than I care to tell you, that's for sure. Yeah. Anything else? Yes, Marie?

I may not want to get into this now, but back to Chris's thing about the parable. Can you think of any doctrine in the Pauline epistles parables that you could face Luke 16 on as a real event?

None that I can think of. No. I don't know. That's why it's a parable. Well, that would be one thing in its favor of being a parable. Yeah. In Luke 15, the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near this and saying, this man received sinners.

And they were sort of mocking him. And then the Lord answered them and he starts in all these parables. And I cannot visualize the Lord giving a legitimate doctrine to a bunch of sinners that didn't want to hear what he said or was making fun of him.

It just didn't seem logical. Yeah. Well, you got a point there. You got a point. Yeah. Yeah. And you're right. I cannot think of any Pauline passage that would buttress that at all.

[73 : 30] And you got to realize that the Pauline epistles are so critical because they provide us with an update from the gospels.

See, the gospels give us an update from the Old Testament. The book of Acts gives us an update from the gospels. And Paul's epistles give us an update from the book of Acts.

And Hebrews, Peter, John, they're going to provide an update from Paul because the scriptures are unfolding dramatically.

It is doctrine on the move, doctrine that is developing. And when people try to put it all together and mesh it, you've got a hodgepodge mess where nothing fits.

And this is one of the reasons why a lot of people have come to the conclusion, contradiction, oh, the Bible's full of contradictions. Well, it isn't full of contradictions if you keep things where they are supposed to be.

[74 : 43] That's called rightly dividing the word of truth. If you do not rightly divide it, you just throw everything in the pot and stir it up and expect to make sense of it.

And it doesn't make any sense at all. And it's not supposed to because you don't take the latest update into consideration. Anybody who has a computer and you've used it for years, maybe 10 or 15 years, and you buy a new computer, it comes with what?

All kinds of updates. It's got all kinds of features and programs and stuff in it that the old one didn't have. And that makes the old one obsolete.

So you go with the new one. Everybody seems to understand that. But when you try to explain to people that this is the way the Bible is, oh, I believe it all. Well, of course we believe it all. Of course we believe it all.

But we don't apply it all. You see, a lot of the things in the Bible are there for our information. They are not there for our duplication. The whole system of animal sacrifice is all there for our information.

[76 : 00] That doesn't mean that we're supposed to go out and sacrifice animals. And someone says, well, I'm going to do everything the Bible says. Well, that's crazy. It's crazy. But they just don't think this through.

And I've even had people tell me, is your church one of those, what do you call it, one of those dispensational churches where you just take part of the Bible? Oh, give me a break.

You don't know where to start with people like that. But these are rumors that get circulating. Oh, they don't believe the whole Bible. They just believe what Paul wrote, that's all. Such nonsense.

But, you know, that's fake news too. So what are you going to do? It's out there, it's everywhere. Well, I told you that I kept my word, didn't I? Keep you until 11 o'clock.

Bless your heart, you've been very patient. I appreciate your input and your interest and your cooperation. Thank you a bunch and you are dismissed. Chris, are we going to do this for, okay?

[77 : 00] Well, let's think about, think about October. That will be the last Thursday in October. I don't even know what it is, but it will be here before we know it. Thank you all and thanks, Chris.

Appreciate your help. Holly.