

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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A Single Drop of Water

Many interesting ideas and concepts are set forth in the word of God that can indeed have real impact when they are properly tied together and/or contrasted as God planned for them to be. Consider with me for a few moments two of those concepts - heaven and hell.

HEAVEN

What is heaven really like? Most of us are familiar with the promise of Jesus in John 14:2-3 that He is now busily preparing our "dwelling place" so that when He returns He may receive us unto Himself. Thus, we recognize that heaven will be a place specially prepared for the people of God. Jesus also noted in John 10:10, "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly." This simply tells us that regardless of what we may think we know about life and living, we have not yet even begun to comprehend what it is all about! And, what we have here is not yet even living! It is sort of like a baby living in the mother's womb-happy, content and thinking it understands something about life only to learn upon leaving "that world" that it did not comprehend life at all! True, we have pictures describing heaven for us in such passages as Revelation 21: 10-ff, etc.; but again we must remember these are limited to figures the human mind can comprehend. I'm indeed convinced they do not even begin to illustrate to us the true beauties and glory of heaven. In Isaiah 45:18, we find God created the earth to be inhabited - and indeed it has many beauties to behold. But if God cared that much about our joy and satisfaction for a temporal body that will soon leave this old world, how much more the beauties and glory for us to enjoy throughout eternity!

Heaven is a place where no sin and corruption exists - no temptations with evil, no crime, no filthy and immoral language or dress, etc. Galatians 5:19-23 assures us that such things will not be there, but rather heaven will indeed be a place of joy, peace and happiness. Society today is often dismayed with the crime that exists - but there will be none of this found in heaven! Isn't that a wonderful thought?

There will be no night there, but rather eternal light and joy! Revelation 21:25 and 22:5 both assure us there will be no "end of the day" when our joys must be set aside for another day and the approaching dread of night. Instead the joy and happiness we are enjoying goes right on with no night to disrupt!

There is also the wonderful excitement and joy of spending eternity in the presence of God, Christ and all the saints of old, as we see in John 14:3 and Matthew 8:11. We will not only be able to meet them, ask them questions, associate with them, and travel with them, but we will be numbered with and among them! Others, no doubt, will be looking up to us and thanking us for our example and steadfastness as a source of encouragement to them, as we look to others (and the saints of old) and appreciate theirs.

But most of all, heaven is truly a place of the greatest love to be found. Revelation 21:4 tells us, "He (God) shall wipe away every tear from their eyes" Luke 16:25 tells us it is a place where we shall be comforted in a fashion we could never find in this world. God will more than compensate us for all we have had to endure. He cares so much that He Himself will be there to wipe away the tear from our eyes as we enter His kingdom of joy and happiness - in spite of how busy He may be, in spite of all the hosts of heaven to be cared for, in spite of all the others He could have sent (and didn't!), He will be there to wipe away that tear! One tiny little tear - a single drop of water! Yet, it commands His personal care and concern. Is it any wonder John tells us "love is from God" (1 John 4:7)? With such love and care to be shown, truly heaven is a place to be desired!

HELL

On the other hand, hell has nothing good to be said for it. It is described as a lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10,15 - this would be about like being caught up in the flow of an active volcano). In Mark 9:43-44, it is spoken of as "unquenchable fire." It is a place of eternal suffering with no way to escape. Have you ever pondered the idea of placing your hand on a burning hot stove and being unable to remove it? Or what about your whole body? And again, need I remind you that the figure is always far short of the actual - being limited to human comprehension? Truly God has sought to warn us!

Hell is full of sin and corruption, from the two-faced hypocrite to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Rev. 21:8). All of the scum from all of the societies for all ages are going to be found there. Just pause and think for a moment of all that will include - from Herod to Hitler and beyond! And, if we are lost and go there, we shall be there among the very worst of them! Indeed this is a terrifying thought to even ponder!

Hell will be a place where there will be no light only eternal darkness and misery (Matt. 25:30). There will be no "light of a new day" or "hope for a better tomorrow" (for there will be no tomorrow). Although there will be a "lake of fire," there will be no light to seek escape. Those who saw the terrified people trying to get away from the "unseen alcohol fire" in the pits at the Indy 500 several years ago have a vague idea what the agony of a lake of fire in eternal darkness will be like! Agony so horrible that the rich man begged - not for a whole drink - but that Lazarus would but dip his finger tip in water and touch his tongue - a single drop of water to relieve his suffering. Try to do this, and see how much comfort it would give! Yet, even this would be gladly accepted as a welcomed relief by the rich man in his suffering "in this flame" (Lk. 16:24).

Likewise, there would be no joy over anticipated reunions with other loved ones in hell (Lk. 16:27-28). The fact that a close friend might be there would offer no satisfaction or comfort. You indeed would prefer to suffer by yourself, if it needs to be that you go there! And in fact it will be alone, for the Bible tells us those in hell "will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the

presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:19). Alone, forgotten, left out and left to suffer in eternal agony.

Unlike heaven, in hell there will be no one to love and care what happens to you. Certainly the devil doesn't care. To him you are but a pawn in the battle being waged against God - and the devil could care less what happens to you in that battle (witness the affliction he heaped on Job in his efforts to get him to curse God - Job 1:7-ff). He will not offer his son on a cross - despised and rejected by the very ones he came to save - to save you from the horrors of hell. And, it's not because he is unaware of what life has in store for you - he has full knowledge (Matt. 8:29; Rev. 20:10). It is simply he could care less what happens to you - you are disposable! You are a disposable pawn he is merely using to try to get to God! Did he care what agony and suffering he brought on Adam and Eve? Or what would happen to mankind if he could succeed in getting Christ to worship him instead (Matt. 4)? No, his response would simply be, "So what?" And others are going to be too concerned with self to care about you then - their only concern is "Don't come;" but if you have, it is too late for further concern.

But, probably the greatest tragedy of all lies in the very concept of this article - one drop of water! In Revelation 21:4 a single drop of water (a single tear) was sufficient to command God's personal care and concern. Yet when the rich man begged for a single drop of water in Luke 16:24, the response was that He was too busy, not interested and no longer cared! Nor was anyone else allowed to supply the single drop of water to relieve his agony! He would find no comfort in hell!

Which response will be yours? Now is your time to prepare-don't let Satan ruin eternity for you!

- Donald P. Ames, via Guardian of Truth, February 7, 1985

“If There Be Righteousness ...”

If there be righteousness in the heart,
there will be beauty in the character.

If there be beauty in the character,
there will be harmony in the home.

If there be harmony in the home,
there will be order in the nation.

If there be order in the nation,
there will be peace in the world.

What Are You?

I am a little thing with a big meaning. I help everyone. I unlock doors, and hearts; banish prejudice. I create friendship and goodwill. I inspire respect and admiration. I violate no law, and I cost nothing. I am pleasing to those of high and low degrees. I am useful every moment. I am COURTESY.

WHY PEOPLE ARE LOST

(Luke 15)

I. Like the sheep, some are lost through carelessness of their own. (Verses 3-7).

II. Like the coin, some are lost through the carelessness of another. (Verses 8-10).

III. Like the younger son, some are lost through the sins of the body. (Verses 11-24).

IV. Like the elder son, some are lost through the sins of the disposition – the lack of love. (Verses 25-32).

- Frank L. Cox

- > "It is possible for a man to live straight in this crooked generation!"
 - > "Never attempt to bear more than one kind of trouble at once. Some people bear three kinds--all they have had, all they have now and all they expect to have!"
 - > "In adversity we usually want God to do a removing job when He wants to do an improving job!"
 - > "Heaven will pay for any loss we suffer to gain it, but nothing can pay for the loss of heaven!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Behold The Kindness And Severity Of God!*" (Text: Rom. 11:22); Sunday evening: "*He Guides Me In The Paths Of Righteousness!*" (Psa. 23:3).