

## Judgment of God – Part V

Well last session, remember, we completed our review of Hell including its reality, its horror, and its beauty. We used the three essences of God by which we must know Him and keep these in some sense of harmony as we engage in knowing Him through His word. He is the sovereign majestic creator king, He is the passionate lover and He is the fierce but righteous judge. We used that to look then at the beauty of Hell and how it testifies of those three essential characteristics of God. His sovereignty, His righteousness and His love together which make it easy to call it the beauty of Hell; because it reveals more of our God Who is beautiful. Susan is going to read one verse for us: Psalm 27:4 – One thing I have asked from the Lord that I shall seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to mediate in His temple. That verse, of course, is a powerful verse for more than just a way that I'm using it. I'm using it because of the description that David gives—to behold Thy beauty. That becomes the thrust of the life of the man who is after God's own heart, is to behold the beauty of the Lord. To refuse to see God as beautiful in all His dimensions including that of the fierce but righteous judge is to remain in self determination, while determining that we could somehow think of a way to make Him even more beautiful than He has revealed Himself to be. So to refuse to see the beauty of Hell in its testimony of the beauty of our God, is to refuse to see how it reveals God in His perfect righteousness which tells us that He is perfectly faithful, exercises perfect judgment, functions in perfect truth, motivated by perfect love while expressing perfect sovereignty.

But today we're going to move on into discussion of Heaven. Now all of mankind, as you know, has only two eternal destinies: Either Hell or Heaven. Before we get too carried away, let's at least review what I call some Heavenly words so that our vocabulary is straight in regard to how I'll be using them. I think all of us know these either through study or know these intuitively; but it's worth crystallizing them to make sure. First, the **Heavens**—the extended physical universe, the starry sky and what's beyond, that which science studies, the cosmos, out there. Next, the **Heavenlies** which refers to the spirit realm—to be contrasted with the physical realm, the unseen as compared to the seen, that which science cannot study, that which the scientific method cannot be applied to. Now we know from the Word of God that the spirit realm preceded the physical, that the spirit created the physical, that the spirit upholds the physical, that the spirit (if it were not there) would render the physical absolutely meaningless, and that the spiritual will outlast the physical. That's why when we look at all those truths about the comparison of the spirit realm—the Heavenlies and the physical realm—that when we asked ourselves the question of: Okay, given all that, which one should I walk by, it becomes one of those duh kind of questions. Because our eyes are fixed on the Heavenlies, the spirit realm. Next is **Heaven itself**—a place where God dwells constantly and where He is manifest constantly. Where we will go after death. And then the **Kingdom of Heaven**—that's wherever the spiritual principles that are operational in Heaven are operational elsewhere. Luke 17:21 – the Kingdom of God is within you to be accessed by us to be expressed on the planet Earth, to bring all the operational principles that function in the presence of God in Heaven itself onto planet Earth through us as Earthen vessels.

Well, to whom is Heaven available? Romans 10:13 – Whosoever will may come. Well, whosoever will what? We know the answer. John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. So, the whosoever will is whosoever will believe in Jesus Christ for his salvation.

Next poster. To address some more things about vocabulary: We need to ensure that we understand the different usages of the words life and death. Because each has two usages and it relates to either spirit realm or physical realm and those two things although interrelated, are not at all the same things. In the

physical realm, the body is said to be alive when the spirit is in the body. But the body is said to be dead when the spirit has departed from the body. James 2:26 tells us that in one simple sentence – the body without the spirit is dead. But in the spirit realm, the words are used a bit differently. Spirit life means the spirit is in communion with the source of life, namely God Himself. Death means the spirit is disconnected from the source of spirit life, namely God. So physical death does not mean that the spirit dies. And spiritual death does not mean that the spirit ceases to exist. Now we have our personal beginning with our physical life here on Earth as human beings. Genesis 1:27 – In His own image created He them.

Well, then Scripture elsewhere gives us a couple of ways by which to understand that. John 4:24 – God is spirit. And Hebrews 13:8 – He is the same yesterday, today and forever; He is eternal. So at least part of the meaning of created in the image of God means that we are spirit and we are eternal as dated from the time that our spirits are created by God. So we are spirits who live in physical bodies. II Corinthians 5:1-2 – For we know that if the Earthly tent, which is our house, is torn down, we have a building from God; a house not made with hands eternal in the Heavens. For indeed in this house we groan longing to be clothed with our dwelling from Heaven, our glorified bodies which of course we will receive upon the rapture. I Peter 1:14 – Knowing that the laying aside of my Earthly dwelling is imminent as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to us. So this body that the world thinks is us is not us. Our Earthly bodies, in Scripture, you can see are referred to as our Earthly houses, our Earthly tents, our Earthly dwellings. But our Earthly bodies are definitely not us. Our Earthly bodies are what we dwell in while on Earth.

When the time comes for our physical bodies to die, that means that it is time for our spirits to depart from our physical bodies. So when does that occur? When God allows it. Why? Because He is sovereign. Psalm 31:15 – My times are in Thy hands. That's part of the sovereignty of God. God in His sovereignty can either cause or permit everything. Now what happens at the time of physical death? Hebrews 9:27 – It is appointed unto men once to die and after that, the judgment. Now we've already covered the judgment in prior sessions.

Next poster. Remember, we speak of the will of God; but the will of God can be thought of in simple laymen's terms of His purposes and His plan to implement those purpose while remaining consistent with his character. So if you know the purposes and you know the plan and you know His character, then you can walk in the will of God. To give you a short summary of the posters you've seen before, remember the purposes. Jesus said I came to seek and to save that which was lost. I came to usher in the abundant life and I came to destroy the works of the devil. So if you know no other purposes of your functioning here as a Christian reflecting the purposes of Jesus Christ, then know those three. Because remember everything you do to seek and to save that which was lost and to usher in the abundant life to yourself and others is simultaneously destroying the works of the devil because the work of the devil is to keep unbelievers from believing and to keep believers from accessing the abundant life so as to give a powerful, incredible testimony of their God.

Those are purposes. The plan is by summing all things up in Jesus. That's Ephesians, chapter 1. So we see here Jesus is revealed in Scripture to be the creator. He's revealed in Scripture to be the Savior and He's revealed in Scripture to be the judge. This is all part of the expression of the will of God to walk out through His plan to sum all things up in Jesus Christ. There are two possible outcomes with Jesus as the judge ultimately. Condemnation to Hell or justification and thus to Heaven. Condemnation simply means pronouncement of our guilt because of our sin and pronouncement of the penalty for that sin if not in Jesus Christ. Because remember ultimately, this eternal destiny has very little, if nothing, to do

with sin. It has to do with whose righteousness are you dependent on? Are you dependent on your own before a Holy God or are you dependent on the righteousness of God Himself as imputed to you through Jesus Christ—by grace through faith? Romans 6:23 – the wages of sin is death. We've already seen that includes spiritual death—separation from God forever in the agony of Hell that we talked about last time. Or...justification. The pronouncement by Jesus Himself that we are righteous, that we have His righteousness, we have the righteousness of God, given by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. So if the judgment, of course, is that we are justified, declared righteous by God Himself, then we go to Heaven. And that's the subject for today. Now understanding those concepts, let us test that understanding by looking at the usage of the words life and death as related to Heaven and Hell.

Next poster. The world uses life to mean existent. But here we see that in Hell, we actually have two different things. We have eternal life in the sense of continuing to exist. But we have eternal death in the sense of absence of communion with God, the outer darkness. Can you be in greater outer darkness than totally separate from the light of God, the truth of God, the love of God, communion with God? So Hell means eternal life always existent; eternal death always apart from God. So Hell, when you take all that together, you could express it as eternal life/death—eternal existence apart from God. An eternal state of continuing to exist which some would use the term life for, but all the while in continuous torture, apart from God, without hope of ever being reconciled to God which is eternal spiritual death.

But Heaven alternatively means eternal life in the sense of continued existence and eternal life in the sense of meaning unity with God. Thus Heaven could be said to be eternal life/life. Eternal existence in the presence of God, in fullness of communion with Him, which is the definition of spiritual life. So eternal life refers to two different things. It refers to time meaning always existent and refers to life, meaning the quality of life, of God Himself, the origin of life, the origin of spirit life and including even the definition of spirit life. So we live eternally while attached in oneness with the source of all spirit life, God Himself. So what is God's attitude at the physical death of someone? Well in regard to His saints (that's us), it's pleasure. Psalms 116:15 – Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. Now that explains, I think, the vision of Stephen as he was about to be stoned to death. Susan will read for us Act 7:55-56. But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into Heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God and he said behold, I see the Heavens opened up and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.

When you see that vision described of Jesus standing—well we're told throughout Scripture that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. So the vision of Jesus standing, conveys to me that sense of eager anticipation that He is about to greet the saint called Stephen into fullness of communion with Himself. Absent from the body—present with the Lord. So that's the response, the revelation if you will, of the eager anticipation that Jesus Christ has to be united in fullness of communion with all of us at the time of our deaths. It is an exciting time, if you can believe that, for God Himself to come out of His position of authority of being seated in order to stand to greet. Now I believe Stephen received that revelation. Susan will read for us Acts 7:59-60. And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling on his knees he cried out with a loud voice, Lord do not hold this sin against them and having said this, he fell asleep.

The power, I think, to live a Christlike life is not in grind it out kind of diligence to rules; but is in fact to see Jesus Christ as He is. Because here's Stephen as he sees Him rise to greet him into Heaven, Stephen is empowered to live and die in a Christlike manner. Because where else do you have in Scripture, other than Jesus and Stephen, someone being killed while saying do not hold this sin against them. That is someone who is full of the Spirit and when we're living in the Spirit and not in the flesh, then we are

seeing Jesus Christ as He is; we're seeing Him rise to greet us and that's part of—to die is gain. When we receive the fullness of the revelation of that we will lose all fear of death because we will eagerly anticipate coming face to face with our God instead of seeing Him through a glass dimly.

Even about Jesus, Hebrews 12:2 tells us that He went to the cross for the joy that was before Him and that's what we're called to do...to die joyfully in His name. So when the concept of martyrdom comes up, it isn't something that we reject because of any contemplated pain involved. Remember the difference between masochism and self crucifixion? The masochist seeks pain because of feeling unworthy of pleasure. But the one who is denying self, following Jesus, seeing Him as He is and seeing the pleasure in the heart of God as you live in a Christlike manner and give testimony of the heart of God to planet Earth, that one willingly accepts pain including nails, including thorns, including stones, in order to reveal the heart of that God to planet Earth. Forgive them, for they know not what they do; because our Christ, remember, didn't just say excuse them...forgive them and you can only forgive that which has been paid for. So no sin has ever yet been excused. Sin is paid for by either us or Jesus Christ. So that's the joy that is before him and that's how we're to die. And these principles that I'm describing are not to be just some vague theologic abstraction that pertain to us only when we kind of grudgingly die. These are operational, spiritual principles that we're to walk in while here on planet Earth. So that, death, where is thy sting? Why? Because like Stephen, it testifies in the Word of God for our benefit so that we can see what happens when someone sees the heart of God as revealed through Jesus Christ standing to greet them into Heaven.

Proverbs 29:18 says without a vision, the people perish. So our hope becomes our vision; our vision is our sustaining view of our eternal future based on the promises of God. You see, we live in the precious present. Remember, we can only worship God at one moment. We can't worship God in the past, we can't worship God in the future. We can only worship God right here, right now as we collectively sit in the basement of Skogman Realty at 12:22. This is the only moment in which you can worship God. You're worshipping Him by listening to His Word. That Word then becomes a part of our vision. Matthew 6:10 – Lord teach us to pray and He says Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. And this is part of how we do that. So I'm going to give you little tidbits of certain Scriptures and then come back and tie them together in a paragraph about how we're to live as Stephen did.

John 17:14-16 speaks of being in the world, but not of the world. Philippians 3:20 speaks of we are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Hebrews 12:2 (as I mentioned previously) speaks of the joy that was before Jesus as He was crucified. Nehemiah 8:10 speaks of the joy of the Lord is our strength. And Philippians 1:21 says to live is Christ and to die is gain.

So after salvation, we as Christians are to live in the Kingdom of Heaven bringing those principles right here on Earth as it is in Heaven, even while living in the precious present here on Earth. For our attitude is that we are in this physical world, but we're not of this physical world. We function here, but this is not our home. We are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven because every moment of your life with every thought you only have two choices: God or ungod. You either have one choice of operating in the spirit according to the principles of God Himself, or operating in the flesh based on your self determination. Those are your only two choices. So we are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. The joy that is before us...how does that apply? We're living according to the principles of God, in the spirit realm, not in the flesh, in part empowered by our vision that sustains us, that vision of the accumulated promises of God as revealed through His Word is our sustaining view of the future. That's our vision and that is the joy that is set before us...to know that someday Jesus Himself, upon our death, will come up from the seated

position and greet us into Heaven. And that joy then that is set before us becomes our strength to face all adversity including death. Because death is not considered adversity, death is gain. Is that true or false? According to God, that's truth; because truth remember is what God is and how God views everything else, not what we view.

So what is God's attitude at the physical death of the unsaved? Well God derives no pleasure. Ezekiel 33:11 – He says through the prophet: I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Imagine that. Godliness, as usual, is opposite to our Earthly frame of reference. We tend to rejoice at the death of the wicked and take no pleasure in the death of the godly. But God rejoices in the death of the godly and takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

So what is God's attitude after that? Well, toward His saints I think from the sum of His Word, it's one of continued joy. Luke 15:7 – All Heaven rejoices when one lost sheep is found. Now how much less do you really think that Heaven will rejoice when that one saved sheep now comes home to his eternal destiny? I don't think that when we are saved and Heaven rejoices that Heaven now says now you had your moment in the sun, so there will never be joy in Heaven again including when you come. Well how about the attitude toward the unsaved? Well, here there's a shift in attitude from the moment of death to later, when judgment comes. At the death of the unsaved, God took no pleasure. Well, why? Because He is still operating in His essence of passionate love and He knows that the door is closed at the moment of death that His love, that His passion to be one with them can never be fulfilled. But after judgment, the attitude of God, at least the essence that becomes revealed to us is driven by love. Remember God's love; God loves you; but God doesn't love only you. God loves what He is. So now what is manifest is love, but instead of love of the unsaved, it is driven by His righteousness which is nothing more than a love of righteousness; because remember love is a passion for oneness. So God being righteous has an absolute passion to remain one with righteousness, and an absolute passion to be totally separate from anything that is unrighteous. So now, He takes no pleasure at the death of the wicked, but afterwards, He has pleasure because He is fulfilling His perfect righteousness. Now God laughs and mocks at their calamity.

Remember in an earlier setting we reviewed Proverbs 1:24-31 – telling us what wisdom does to those who reject her. Well, truth is how God views reality. Wisdom is nothing more than a Godly integration and application of how God views reality. Truth, thus, is the foundation of all wisdom. There is no wisdom apart from truth and there is no truth apart from how God views reality. So this is what God does to those, who throughout their lifetime, until He was ready to close the door and have their spirit leave their body, who rejected His Son, He will laugh and mock at their calamity. It's nothing more than II Thessalonians 2:10-12 – They did not receive a love of the truth so as to be saved; so God gave them over. Abandonment wrath; He gave them over to let them eat of the fruit of their own ways; He gave them over to their self determination; He gave them over in their rejection of His Son; He gave them over to let them stand on their own righteousness before a Holy God.

Well, let's look at a few aspects of Heaven. Matthew 6:9 – The Father is there. Jesus even started the prayer: Our Father Who art in Heaven. God is on His throne in Heaven. Isaiah 66:1 – through the prophet He says, Heaven is My throne. It's illuminated by God Himself. We're told in Revelation 21:23 – speaking of the New Jerusalem – the City has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it; for the glory of God has illumined it and its lamp is the Lamb of God. And you can take that as meaning physical light; you can take that as meaning also light meaning truth; because you're in the fullness of truth in Heaven in the fullness of communion with the One Who is truth. So Heaven is where God dwells eternally and where He is manifest eternally. He is omnipresent; but He's not always

manifest in a recognizable way to us everywhere. But in Heaven He is manifest in a way that is always recognizable. Well who has authority in Heaven? What's the plan of God? To sum all things up in Jesus. Matthew 28:18 – All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and in Earth. So every time we look in Scripture in the New Testament and we want to know what is God the Father doing? Well, He's summing things up in Jesus. How do we know the purposes of the Father? Well, let Jesus tell us. Even on the mount of transfiguration and so on, what did the voice say? This is my beloved Son, listen to Him. He can't make it any clearer what His plan is.

So all that is fine, I'm sure you're thinking about the Father, fine about the Son, fine about all that; but what about us? Well we need to look at the One Who has all authority and see just what He is doing in the meantime after his ascension into Heaven before we join Him after death. He's doing at least these two things: John 14:2 – I go to prepare a place for you. Now I think that prepared place, you can think of in many different ways; but one is His heart is prepared for us to join Him. His heart is there eagerly anticipating the day that we (His saints) will come to Him to fulfill that passion for oneness that He has for us. When no part of ourselves will remain outside of Himself.

Next poster. In Hebrews 7:25 – He forever lives to make intercession for us. Well, what does that mean? Just how does He intercede for us? Well, we can think of it in these two ways: We stand in the gap; that's what we're called to do while we're here as Christians. Well, what's the gap? It's the way things are compared to the way things ought to be. And we're to stand in that gap as Earthen vessels, as ambassadors for Christ, as living epistles, and so on giving testimony of the will, the plan, the purposes, and the character of God; in the gap between the way things are and the way things were meant to be with the principles of Heaven operational on Earth. Well that leaves two gaps then for Jesus or for God through the different Persons in the Trinity. There's my righteousness compared to the righteousness of God. Well, thank you that Jesus stands in that gap. And also the gap between what I can do and what God calls me to do. Well that's the gap that the Holy Spirit stands in to empower us to be what He calls us to be; to enable us to do what He calls us to do. So God Himself in these two Persons of the Trinity with the Father willing and decreeing, Jesus fulfilling the righteousness, the Holy Spirit empowering and revealing to stand in the gap. What more intercession could we want than what's revealed on that little poster?

In fact, you know from Scripture, we have no righteousness at all apart from Him. Isaiah 64:6 – All our righteousness is as filthy rags; not all our unrighteousness...all our righteousness. The best of human endeavor falls woefully short of the perfection of God. There's never been a truly holy act by a human being apart from God Himself. And in fact, we should know from Scripture that we can do nothing. So He stands in those gaps. John 15:5 – says apart from Me you can do nothing. Now we prefer, even as Christians to regard these two gaps as partially filled by two different things. One is partially filled by our righteousness and partially completed then by Jesus or the Holy Spirit. But of course, that's nothing more than to continue to walk in self determination, while regarding God as simply being wrong when He said, all your righteousness is as filthy rags and apart from Me you can do nothing. That is nothing more than continued self determination while we continue to judge God as simply being wrong when He said in His Word, you see. So those are the gaps that are being stood in at the present time for us as New Testament saints.