

Life After Life: Eternity Is Forever

(Luke 23:39-43)

Introduction

In recent years, several books on the subject of “The Reality of Heaven” have proven popular to the reading public.

First, in November 2010, the book entitled, **Heaven is for Real: A Little Boy’s Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back** was published telling the story of a young boy emerging from life-saving surgery with remarkable stories of his visit to heaven. The son of a small town Nebraska pastor, Colton told of seeing the doctor operating and his dad praying in the waiting room. He told of meeting his miscarried sister, whom no one had told him about and his great grandfather who died 30 years before Colton was born, then shared impossible-to-know details about each.

Second, in May of 2012, the book entitled, **To Heaven and Back: A Doctor’s Extraordinary Account of Her Death, Heaven, Angels, and Life Again: A True Story** was published. The book is an account of the drowning of orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Mary Neal. In the book she tells of her feelings and surroundings in heaven, her communication with angels, and her deep sense of sadness when she realized it wasn’t her time.

Mary’s life has been forever changed by her newfound understanding of her purpose of earth, her awareness of God, her clear relationship with Jesus, and her personal spiritual journey suddenly enhanced by a first-hand experience in heaven.

Third, in October 2012, the book, **Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon’s Journey into the Afterlife** appeared telling the story of Dr. Eben Alexander’s near-death experience. Scientists have long argued that near-death experiences were simply fantasies impossible, but are simply fantasies produced by brains under extreme stress. Alexander’s story is not a fantasy. Before he underwent his journey, he could not reconcile his knowledge of neuroscience with any belief in heaven, God, or the soul.

Today, Alexander is a doctor who believes that true health can be achieved only when we realize that God and the soul are real and that death is not the end of personal existence but only a transition.

So the question remains, “Is there anything beyond this life?” According to the Bible, the answer is a resounding, YES!!

However, there is a great deal of misconception about the AFTERLIFE.

One group, calling themselves Christian, believes that man, but obeying the commandments of God and keeping the whole law will eventually reach the power and exaltation by which he also will become a god. This group hopes to become gods of their own worlds procreating endless numbers of children.

The concept of **reincarnation**, a long –time belief declares a person dies and is “re-born” into another earthly existence depending on the life they lived. The can be promoted up or devolve.

This idea of Life After Life is confusing **unless** you have a clear explanation from the source of eternal life – God Himself.

Today, we begin a short series entitled, Life After Life.
Why? Because eternity is forever, we need to get it right!!

During this series we will answer the questions . . .

- 1) What happens the instant we die?
- 2) What heaven be like?
- 3) What about Hell?
- 4) Can we affect our afterlife or is it all a gamble?

Contextualize Luke 23: 39-43.

I. Eternity is Real – “paradise”

“I assure you: Today you will be with Me in **PARADISE.**”

Many times I have been in a hospital room or a hospice room and observed a Christian pass into eternity peacefully, with a smile on their face, with anticipation even. Why? Because eternity is real.

Often, we hear stories of loved ones passing into eternity and speak of Jesus or angels. Why? Because eternity is real.

Why is there seemingly a natural inclination of belief of something beyond this life, belief in a higher power coordinating things, or belief in a greater scheme of things?

Ecclesiastes 3:11 – Eternity in their hearts

II. Eternity is Instant – “today”

“I assure you: **TODAY** you will be with Me in paradise.”

One group, calling themselves Christian, believes that the soul “sleeps.” when one’s life is complete. That is, it simply becomes inert and resides only in the memory of God.

The reality is that everyone experiences a continuous soul consciousness.

III. Eternity has two ends - “you”

“I assure you: today **YOU** will be with Me in paradise.”

Heaven

Hell

IV. Eternity is determine in this life – “you will”

“I assure you: today YOU WILL be with Me in paradise.”

V. Eternity is irreversible – “Today, you will be”

“I assure you TODAY YOU WILL BE with Me in paradise.”

Illustration: Luke 16:19-31

Conclusion

Because eternity is forever, we need to get it right!

The Bible says . . .

- Man is a sinner and he cannot save himself
- God chose to solve man’s sin problems through Jesus Christ.
- Salvation becomes effective for you through faith in Christ’s redemptive work on the cross.