

“The Hereafter”

(part 5)

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I. Introduction

A. The new movie

1. “Hereafter” by Clint Eastwood
 - a. Starring Matt Damon
2. Explores the single biggest question in life
 - a. *Where are they now?*
 - b. What happens the moment after death?
 - c. What will you experience?
3. For those who have lost a loved one
 - a. Staring down at a body
 - b. But they’re not there
 - c. Where are they now?
4. Will attempt to answer this...and other critical questions

B. Questions like:

1. *Will heaven be boring?*
2. *Will we get to hang out with the angels?*
3. *Will there be families in heaven?*
4. *Will we be male or female?*

5. *Will we be married in heaven?*
6. *What will your heavenly body really look like?*
7. *What are “the crowns” and how do we earn them?*
8. *Will there be degrees of rewards?*
9. *Do babies (born and unborn) go to heaven?*
10. *Do they stay babies?*
11. *How old will you be?*

C. But today, “Where are they now?”

1. Where will you go if you die today?

D. I’ve got a lot waiting for me in Heaven

1. My Redeemer

- a. Hebrews 9:24

(24) For Christ...entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence

- b. The first person you’ll want to see
- c. Finally meet the One who died for you
- d. Ultimately, Heaven is where Jesus is

2. My Relatives

- a. Hebrews 12:1

(1) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

- b. Your “brothers and sisters in Christ”
 1. Have died and are waiting for us
- c. Yes, we’ll recognize each other

- d. When you pass the “tipping point”
 - 1. More friends and family on the other side
 - 2. The grand reunion

3. My Reward

- a. Matthew 5:12

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven,

- 1. God encourages us to seek rewards

- b. Indestructible

- 1. I Peter 1:4

(4) and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.

- 2. The only safe investment

- c. Invest in people

- 1. Only “people” are going to heaven
- 2. Your bank account isn’t

- d. Waiting for you

- 1. I Peter 1: 4

(4) and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.

4. My Residency

- a. Philippians 3:20

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

- b. Ambassadors in a foreign land

- 1. Ours is a temporary assignment
- 2. The joy of returning home

c. Aliens and strangers

1. I Peter 2:11

(11) Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

2. Must behave like citizens of heaven

5. My Reservation

a. Can't get into some restaurants without making a reservation

1. Checking the book for reservations

b. I've made my reservation for Heaven

1. My name is in "the book"

a. Revelation 21:27

Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

2. The need to respond...RSVP

3. Invitations to a wedding

6. My Renewed Body

a. Philippians 3:21

(21) who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

b. What will that look like?

7. My Reign

a. After Christ returns

b. Our coming reign in the Kingdom

1. I Corinthians 6:2-3

(2) Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? (3) Do you not know that we will judge angels?

E. But before we go there

1. The single greatest mystery
 - a. Where are the dead now?
 1. Your loved ones
 - b. Where would you go if you died today?

F. The seeming contradiction

1. Our bodies get tossed in a grave

- a. I Thessalonians 4:13-14

(13) Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. (14) We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

- b. “to fall asleep”
 1. Why not just say “dead”
 2. The Greek word means “to recline with anticipation of getting up the next morning.”
- c. Referring to the physical body...not the soul
- d. The body is asleep in the grave awaiting the resurrection

2. Then where’s the soul?

- a. The real you
- b. Jesus to the thief on the cross
 1. ***“Today you will be with me in Paradise”***
- c. Paul’s statement
 1. ***“to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord”***

2. Your soul

II. The story in Luke 16**A. Two people compared**

(19) There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. (20) At his gate was laid a beggar name Lazarus, covered with sores (21) and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

1. Their lives (vs. 19-21)

a. Why do some call this the “story of Lazarus and Dives”

1. Dives (or *Dye veez*) is Latin word for “rich”

b. The rich man...v. 19

(19) There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.

c. The beggar...v. 20-21

(20) At his gate was laid a beggar name Lazarus, covered with sores (21) and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

1. At the gate of the rich man

2. Sick and hungry

3. Dogs

2. Their deaths (vs. 22)

a. The beggar...v. 22

(22) The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side (Abraham's Bosom).

1. No burial mentioned

2. Either buried in the potter's field

3. Or body thrown into the dump called Gehenna

- a. Where they burned the trash
- b. The rich man...v. 22

The rich man also died and was buried.

- 1. Buried in a nice tomb

3. Their “hereafter” (v. 23-31)

- a. The soul of the rich man.....v. 23-24

(23) In hell (Hades), where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. (24) So he called to him, “Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.”

- 1. A place of **Misery**....v.23-24
 - a. Hell (Hades)
 - b. The rich man was now begging
 - c. Not punished because he was rich...

- 2. A place of **Memory**.....v. 25-26

(25) But Abraham replied, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. (26) And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.”

- a. People in Hades can see what they have missed
- b. Will remember their rejection of Christ
- 3. The great chasm
 - a. Could see...but not cross
 - b. No second chances
- b. The soul of the beggar

(22) The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side (Abraham’s Bosom).

1. Abraham's Bosom
 - a. Same as "Paradise"
 - b. A place of great comfort
 - c. The souls of the righteous
 1. Prior to resurrection of Jesus
 - d. Bodies "asleep in the ground"
2. Angelic escort
 - a. Souls carried by angels to Abraham's Bosom
 - b. Your angelic escort

B. Two places compared

1. Hades (called "Hell")

- a. Various terms for Hell

1. The Lake of Fire

- a. The Great White Throne of Judgment (Rev. 20:13-14)
- b. The Beast and False Prophet
- c. Satan
- d. The eternal hell

2. Gehenna

- a. Mark 9:47
- b. Translated "hell"
- c. The "Valley of Hinnom"
 1. A dump where they burned their trash
 2. And the fire never went out

- d. Synonymous with “The Lake of Fire” or Hell

3. *The Abyss*

- a. Holding tank
- b. For Satan and some demons

4. *Sheol*

- a. The Hebrew word for “*Hades*”
- b. Used to referred to the realm of the dead in general

5. *Hades*

- a. The term used here
 - 1. *hah dace*
 - 2. “The place of departed souls”
 - 3. Only used in the NT to refer to the place of the wicked prior to final judgment in eternal hell
- b. Death and Hades will be cast into the Lake of Fire
 - 1. Revelation 20:14

Then death and Hades were thrown into the Lake of Fire

- c. Hades is the temporary or intermediate Hell
- d. Soul’s of the unrighteous awaiting the final judgment
- e. Rich man in Luke 16

(25) But Abraham replied, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus receive bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. (26) And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.”

2. **Abraham’s Bosom** (or “Side”)

- a. Various terms

1. Paradise
 2. Abraham's Bosom (only used here)
 3. Lazarus given a place of high honor, reclining next to Abraham at the heavenly banquet
- b. The souls of believers...prior to the resurrection of Jesus
- c. May be referred to in Ephesians 4:8-10

(8) That is why it says: "When Jesus ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (9) (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? (10) He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

- d. Brought the OT saints out of Paradise and into heaven
- e. Jesus to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43)

Today you will be with me in Paradise

- f. To Paradise....and then to heaven
 1. When Christ arose
- g. We do know that Heaven is where Jesus is
 1. Where I will go upon death
- h. We know that it is a place of comfort
 - a. Philippians 1:21-24

(21) For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. (22) If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! (23) I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; (24) but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

- i. All are awaiting an eternal body
 1. Earthly bodies asleep in the grave
 2. The dead in Christ will rise first

j. What kind of body do the righteous dead have right now?

1. Their earthly bodies are rotting in the grave
2. And they don't yet have their eternal bodies
3. God will clothe us with some form of body
4. Some hints in II Corinthians 5:1-5

(1) Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. (2) Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, (3) because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. (4) For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. (5) Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

C. The need to respond to God's invitation

(27) He answered, "Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, (28) for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

(29) Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."

(30) "No, father Abraham," he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."

(31) He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

III. Summary

A. The other big question (Randy Alcorn's book, "Heaven")

Several years ago, Ruthanna Metzgar, a highly respected professional singer, was asked to sing at the wedding of a very wealthy man. She was honored to do so.

After the wedding the reception would be held on the top two floors of Seattle's Columbia Tower, the Northwest's tallest skyscraper. She and her husband, Roy, were excited about attending.

At the reception, waiters in tuxedos offered luscious hors d'oeuvres and exotic beverages. The wedding party ascended a beautiful glass staircase that led to the top floor. They were then followed by their guests.

At the top of the stairs, a maitre d' with a bound book greeted the guests outside the doors. "May I have your name, please?"

"I am Ruthanna Metzgar and this is my husband, Roy."

He searched the M's. "I'm not finding it. Would you spell it please?"

Ruthanna spelled her name slowly. After searching the book, the maitre d' looked up and said, "I'm sorry, but your name isn't here."

"There must be some mistake," Ruthanna replied. "I'm the singer. I sang at the wedding!"

The gentleman answered, ***"It doesn't matter who you are or what you did. Without your name in the book you cannot attend the banquet."***

He motioned to a waiter and said, "Show these people to the service elevator, please." The Metzgars followed the waiter past beautifully decorated tables laden with shrimp, whole smoked salmon, and magnificent carved ice sculptures. Adjacent to the banquet area, an orchestra was preparing to perform, the musicians all dressed in dazzling white tuxedos.

The waiter led Ruthanna and Roy to the service elevator, ushered them in, and pushed "G" for the parking garage.

After locating their car and driving several miles in silence, Roy reached over and put his hand on Ruthanna's arm. "Sweetheart, what happened?"

"When the invitation arrived, I was busy," Ruthanna replied. "I never bothered to RSVP. Besides, I was the singer. Surely I could go to the reception without returning the RSVP."

"It doesn't matter who you are or what you did. Without your name in the book you cannot attend the banquet."

All are invited

These are the Days of Elijah.....Behold he comes!