

"Eternity"

Job asked in Job 14:14, "If a man dies, will he live again?" Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're exploring the effects of this life on our eternal destiny. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Scriptures open our eyes to God who made us, the God who gives us life, and the God who will one day judge us. Each of us has an eternal destiny beyond this life, and the Word of God gives us wisdom to prepare for life beyond the grave. We hope and pray you're prepared to meet God one day. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Someone said, "We live in a clock-eyed world"; we're all subject to schedules and deadlines. And we can't escape the urgency of time. The Lord Jesus said in John 9 and verse 4, that "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work." Now all this demand for our time in this life can lead us to forget or to ignore the idea of our eternal destiny. And so we must awaken from our spiritual complacency and realize that God's commandments and His will for our lives really does matter. Romans 13:11 to 12 says, "Do this, knowing the time, that it's already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."

If we remain in spiritual darkness my friend, and we fail to come to the Lord, we're going to face an eternity without God's blessing and promises. But if we put on the armor of light and fill our lives with faith, hope, love, and the word of God, we can live with God eternally. Jesus suffered for your sins, the just for the unjust, to bring you to God. Where will you spend eternity?

We offer this study free on eternity. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Psalm 90:1 to 4, and explore the fact that we will one day face our eternal destiny.

Our reading today comes from a prayer of Moses found in Psalm 90, verses 1 through 4. "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. You turn man back into dust, And say, "Return, O children of men." For a thousand years in Your sight, Are like yesterday when it passes by, Or as a watch in the night." That's the words of Moses and his prayer in Psalm 90.

Let's pray. "Oh Father help us to have an understanding of Your eternal nature, and our own mortality. Father help us to be prepared for the day when we will come and see You and be with You. Bless us and help us always to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

Thinking about eternity brings many important thoughts to mind. First, God is eternal, but we live only for a time on this earth. We're destined for something more than this life. Compare what Moses prayed in Psalm 90, verses 1 and 2 with verse 10. He said in verses 1 and 2, "Lord, you've been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." God has always existed, but God said our existence on earth is quite limited. He said in verse ten, "The years of our life are seventy, or

even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away."

James 4 and verse 14 reminds us, "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You're just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." The ancient man Job said in Job 14:1, that "Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil." Well, as we age, it seems the days and months pass faster than before.

Now God is not bound by time like we are. Paul praised God in 1 Timothy 1 and verse 17 as "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever."

2 Peter 3 and verse 8 says, "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Now even if you lived to be a hundred years old, that is only one tenth of a thousand. God created time for humans, but He's not controlled by time. He knows the past, He knows the present, and the future.

And there's more than this life on earth! The Lord Jesus warns us in Luke 12:4 to 5, "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!" Now the Scriptures give us records of those who have died and yet are still in a conscious existence. Matthew 17:1 to 3 tells of Jesus having a conversation with Moses and Elijah. And both had been dead for several centuries!

The Lord Jesus said to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection in Matthew 23:31 to 32, "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'? He's not the God of the dead but of the living." Yes, though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead physically, they were alive in the hereafter.

Now after the death of her brother Lazarus, the Lord told Martha that he would rise again. And Martha said, well "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; and he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world" (John 11:23 to 27). My friend, do you believe this?

Romans 14:7 to 9 says, "For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." Yes we belong to Jesus in life and in death. Because of Him we have a promise of new life and a new body. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 1 says, "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house (that is his body we now have) is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We're going to have a new imperishable, immortal body in heaven one day.

We have hope in Christ of the life to come. Ephesians 2:4 to 7 says, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you've been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

Second, God speaks to us about eternity. Psalm 90, verses 1 and 2 say, "Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the

earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." Everlasting to everlasting is really kind of hard to understand; it's beyond time. Ecclesiastes 3 and verse 11 reveals, that "He (God) has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end." Now to people who can only think in terms of start and finish, eternity is beyond our understanding. Eternity refers to "infinite time, without beginning or end. We might speak of something we experience that goes on and on, lasting an "eternity"; but that's only a figure of speech. Eternal things have no end.

Now we can offer illustrations, but they're insufficient to fully grasp eternity. For instance, when ten thousand times ten thousand times ten thousand years have passed, eternity will have just begun. I recall as a boy my father speaking about eternity this way: Now suppose you could suspend a rope from here to the moon, some 221,000 to 253,000 miles from the earth. And let's send an ant on that rope all the way to the moon and let him pick up one grain of soil from the moon and bring it back. Well in the time that it would take for an ant to bring back the entire moon grain by grain, that's just the beginning of eternity. You see, eternity is infinite time, without beginning or end; and it refers to something that time does not and cannot change.

Third, the consequences of our choices will last for an eternity, yes. Galatians 6:7 to 8 says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life." You know some Christians imagine they can sin all they like and still go to heaven. But sowing to the flesh will only bring corruption and condemnation.

Romans 8:12 to 13 speaks clearly, "So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh--for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." When a person dies spiritually, he forfeits his hope of living with God eternally. Sin breaks God's heart and it separates us from God. Isaiah 59, verses 1 and 2 say, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear."

Let's consider some things that will separate us from God. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:14 to 15, "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." You know, whether we're willing to forgive is a serious matter to God, and it should be to each of us.

Some unfairly rush to judge others, without considering their own sins. Like the Pharisees they condemn others over man-made traditions or their own rules. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:1 to 5, "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. "For in the way that you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, there is a log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." Now if people realized the consequences of how harshly and unfairly they have condemned others, they might not judge so hastily. The Lord wants us to be fair as we consider others. Jesus said in John 7 and verse 24, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Some never consider the poor who are hurting and need help. Love for God means loving others enough to help them. 1 John 3:16 to 18 says, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us;

and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." According to Matthew 25: and verse 40, when we serve others, we're serving the Lord Himself. You remember He says "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." He also said to those who failed to help their brothers in verses 45 to 46, "'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And then He said, 'these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'" Now please notice: eternal punishment lasts just as long as eternal life.

And so we must be careful how we live our lives. Ephesians 5:15 to 17 says, "Therefore be careful how you walk (that is how you live), not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." Some people think that because God is love, He'll never hold us accountable for anything; but nothing could be farther from the truth. The passing pleasures of sin are just not worth an eternity separated from God. Some people imagine they can feed their pet sin, and there'll be no consequences to their actions.

But Hebrews 3:12 to 14 says, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." What about you? You see your eternity is hanging in the balance, and the Lord is waiting on you to come to Him, and come with love and faith and obedience. Won't you come to the Lord? Won't you love Him and serve Him?

Let's pray together. "Father, we pray that You will give us hearts of wisdom, that we may consider out latter end, and may know what the future holds. And Father, that it may cause us to turn from sin and to live in righteousness, and to love You and to love others. Help us Father always to do Your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 11:9, "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things." You know life can be filled with many things, and what we choose matters. Solomon himself followed his impulses and learned that they didn't give him lasting contentment. He said in Ecclesiastes 12:13 to 14, "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil."

Psalms 90 and verse 12 says, "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." Realizing life on earth is limited can cause us to wake up. Where you and I spend eternity depends on whether we've stayed close to God, whether the blood of Jesus has cleansed us, and whether we have believed and obeyed the Lord. There is a life beyond. If we become consumed with the present, we may miss the beauty and joy of an eternal heaven.

Please, get that heart of wisdom! Love the Lord! Place your faith and trust in Him and in His words. Turn from sin and live in righteousness. Confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Be baptized into Christ, immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins. That's what the inspired apostle Peter told the people to do in Acts 2 and verse 38 at the very beginning of the church and it's what we still

need to do to be right with God. You see, that's how we're born again and how we become children of God and heirs of heaven.

We hope that today's study about eternity has stirred you to consider your soul's destiny. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you be saved and to be right with God.

We ask that you focus your heart on God today by worshiping at church. You know, everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ in your area. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. Keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. As always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.