

The Man, The Myth, The Legend
Week 6: Jesus and Eternity - Part II

I. We've taken the last few weeks to have an in-depth look at some important questions regarding:

[Slide]: Jesus.

A. Who does Jesus claim to be? What does the Bible say about this? We can disregard the words of God in the Scripture, but then on what basis are we formulating our belief in Jesus? It's pretty bold for us to disregard the words of Scripture that have been battle tested for 2000 years! So, the plan for the remainder of the year is to dig into the depths of Scripture and see what we can learn about Jesus. We don't want to stop there. We want to follow Him and bend our lives to the book!

B. Next week we're starting a new series called:

[Slide]: Among Us.

1. We'll be looking at Christ in the Old Testament. If we observe the Scriptures carefully, we can see the co-eternal Son of God actively engaged with creation long before the incarnation. Christ was present at the call of Abraham. He was present at the burning bush. He was present in the exodus. And yes, He was present in the fiery furnace. We can easily look at the birth of Jesus (incarnation) and think of it as a bit disconnected from the God of the Old Testament, but I would caution against that view. We'll begin that exciting series next week.

II. This week, we're finishing up:

[Slide]: The Man, The Myth, The Legend

A. We started looking last week at the eternal nature of Jesus Christ to embrace the mystery that God the Father and God the Son have existed in relationship for all eternity past. So has God the Spirit! There has never been a time in which God has not existed as Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit. One in essence or nature, yet three in persons.

1. There was complete unity and fulfillment within the Godhead before creation. Creation was an act of love out of the abundance of God.

Ephesians 1:4 [Slide]: 4 For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.

2. In other words, there were no "hidden costs" when it came to humanity. Our Triune God knew full well what the costs would be, and He willingly chose supreme, sacrificial love. Because God is love.

B. God stands above time, and all of eternity is but today in His presence. To have a better understanding of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we've looked into eternity past and today we're looking into eternity future. Jesus, co-eternal Son of God, who has forever been and will forever be! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29) was none other than the co-eternal Son who stepped into time and space becoming one of us. Jesus, fully God and fully man.

1. There is much to be determined from our perspective when it comes to eternity, but Scripture gives us enough to know that our future with Jesus is going to be indescribably good! I hope to accomplish a few things today. I'd like to describe what Jesus is like and will be like in eternity? And I'd like us to have a firm grasp on what our relationship will be like with Jesus for eternity and what that must therefore imply?

2. My understanding of the End Times timeline is that the eternal state will come after the rapture, tribulation, and the 1,000 years reign of Christ. We can have some flexibility in how these events unfold but what we must believe as Jesus followers is that Jesus is returning, He will judge the world, and those who are in Christ will spend eternity in the presence of God. Revelation 21 and 22 give us a glimpse at what our eternity is going to be like, and I'll give us the cliff notes version:

[Slide]: We will worship Jesus and be completely satisfied in His presence forever!

a. We will not lack or be left wanting in anything. The deepest yearnings of our soul will be eternally met in the presence of God.

3. But let's back up. There are some key texts we need to consider that describe Jesus who will be the eternal recipient of our worship. After the resurrection yet before the ascension, the disciples were in His presence. Jesus was in His resurrected body which could be seen, touched, digest food and drink, et cetera.

Jesus was not merely spirit or somehow non-physical. We must believe that Jesus physically arose from the grave and will physically return to earth. This is what Scripture teaches.

a. Here's the message the angels pronounce:

Acts 1:11 [Slide]: 11 They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven."

Jesus will return in the manner that He ascended. That refers to the ascension itself, but it also refers to the very nature of Jesus. The God-Man who died, rose, and was ascended into heaven will be the same God-Man that returns to bring those who have trusted Him into God's presence and judge the world. I can't explain how this works, but we get a transformed body that is in the "likeness" of Jesus's glorious body! If any of us die before the Lord's return, our souls will be reunited with our glorified or resurrected bodies. Listen to this:

Philippians 3:18-21 [Slide]: 18 For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, 20 but our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

(1) There is continuity between the humanness of Jesus while on earth with the Jesus we'll eternally worship! His physical resurrection assures our physical resurrection. Jesus as the co-eternal Son of God and Son of Man is the mediator of all creation and through His death and resurrection is the mediator over redemption. In His humanity, Jesus will serve as our ongoing mediator in the presence of our Holy God.

b. Over the last few weeks, we've considered Jesus our brother and Jesus our king. These are both used to describe Jesus in Scripture (Romans 8:29; Revelation 19:16). In Revelation 21-22, eternity is described for us, not conclusively, because we couldn't fathom the depths even if we tried.

But what we do have is seven individual references to Jesus as:

[Slide]: Lamb.

(1) We could worship Jesus as brother or we could worship Jesus as king, and He doesn't cease to be either. Yet, the common title ascribed to Jesus in the eternal state is Lamb. Interestingly enough, the Lamb is the title that most intimately connects Jesus with the sacrifice He willingly made on our behalf. On the cross, the full depth of evil and the full depth of God's love came colliding together to achieve God's assured victory over sin and death. They collided together upon the Lamb that sacrificed all so that we might be made right with God. It is Jesus as Lamb that ultimately paved the way for relationship with God. It is Jesus as Lamb that brings together the new heaven and the new earth the very dwelling place of God with His people!

c. There are many things that don't make sense and never will on this side of eternity. Evil and suffering are at the top of the list. We have too weak of a view of eternity and such a skewed view of evil and suffering because we've grown so comfortable with this life. We've forgotten that our temporal lives are simply preparation for true life which is eternal.

Romans 8:16-17 [Slide]: 16 The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, 17 and if children, also heirs- heirs of God and coheirs with Christ- if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

(1) The focus here isn't on the suffering. We aren't going out to stir up suffering. But suffering will come. No one gets out of life without scars. We rarely realize the battles that each of us are facing, and I think if we could be reminded of this, we might be convicted to petition on behalf of one another rather than point our fingers. Suffering is inevitable. It's never easy. But it's also not for nothing! There is a present connection with our future glorification. All our suffering will be seen in light of the Lamb.

Revelations 21:3-4 [Slide]: 3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.

C. We've considered what Jesus will be like in the eternal state. What then does our relationship with Him look like and what does that then mean?

- 1. The relationship between Jesus and those who have trusted in Him is described in the most intimate language possible. Christ followers are those who comprise the "C"hurch and we are identified collectively as the Bride of Christ. Marriage is such a sacred covenant because it reflects the covenant that Jesus Christ has made to us. It's an unbreakable bond and as much as we might be anticipating eternity, Jesus is even more so anticipating spending eternity with us! Because of our association with Jesus, we are on the VIP List, otherwise known as the Lamb's book of life. Eternity is a prepared place for a prepared people!**

John 14:1-3 [Slide]: 1 "Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.

- 2. What will we experience because of our eternal relationship with Jesus?**

Revelation 21 and 22 gives us sharp detail on the Holy City: The New Jerusalem. The end goal is not simply "going to heaven" like we may think. The end of time is marked by the creation of the new heaven and new earth with the centerpiece of this new creation being New Jerusalem. Currently, heaven and earth are separated but not so with the new creation. Heaven and earth will come together, and God will eternally dwell with His people! The New Jerusalem will be comprised of the righteous before Christ who looked in anticipation of the promises of God, those of us who have trusted Jesus as Savior during the Church age (between the resurrection and rapture), and those who turn to Jesus during the tribulation. Many of which will be Jewish people. We need to pray for Israel and for a turning to God to occur.

- a. The new digs in the New Jerusalem are indescribable. The measurements alone are staggering! 12,000 stadia are roughly 1,400 miles, but the city is in the shape of a cube. It could very well be a dimension yet unknown for us, but just using the standard measurements we do know; we're looking at a space that is 6,000 times larger than earth. If you want a cabin out in the woods, it probably won't be a problem! I don't know.**
- b. The beauty of the city will be incredible, but it will be secondary to the radiance of God's glory that will saturate us for all eternity! The value and worth of God that we will come to experience by abiding in His presence. All the jewels and gold that are used in the New Jerusalem as common building products, I take to be in comparison to the fullness of God's glory! How many people have sold their souls for gold and compared to God's glory they're street pavers! We were created to worship, and eternity may encase a host of things, but it will always be a continual experience of worship! In our worship, we will experience the continuous satisfaction of an uninhibited relationship with God because of the Lamb!**

Revelations 21:22-24 [Slide]: 22 I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

- c. Our eternal satisfaction will continuously flow from the glory of God as He reigns on His throne. The throne of God is also identified as the throne of the Lamb. As Father, Son, and Spirit are the source of glory and our satisfaction, God is also the Sustainer of our ongoing eternal life.**

Revelations 22:1-5 [Slide]: 1 Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, 3 and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.

- d. The new heavens and the new earth will come together in the New Jerusalem where our hearts and minds will be captivated for all eternity by the face to face, intimate, relationship that we'll have with the all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present God because of the Lamb that was slain. The Lamb alone is our eternal mediator as the God-Man who closed the gap on our behalf!**

- D. The new heaven and new earth comprise a prepared place for a prepared people. You can't pay the price of admission at the door. Why? Because we are incapable of paying the price, period. Jesus has made a way for us to be in eternal fellowship with God. Jesus said there are many rooms in His Father's house. He desires that all come, but it will not be forced.**
- 1. God loves you! You're here today; you've heard the message that God wants us to hear. Our hearts don't long for more money, sex, drugs, alcohol, accolades, degrees, et cetera. Our hearts long for the presence of God. We can secure our place in His presence by trusting in the Lamb today. When we do, our hearts become alive to God and we begin to experience the satisfaction and sustenance that only Jesus can supply. It's a free gift, but we must accept the gift.**