

Are You Living

For The

AFTER-LIFE



OR

AFTER-DEATH



Introduction

Why should we be concerned about events following our life here on Earth, after all it is a lifetime away? There are various beliefs (opinions) about what occurs to man's spirit or soul when he leaves the land of the dying.

These opinions generally fall into three categories:

- a. There is neither eternal life nor eternal death.
- b. Every being created in God's image will live eternally with God, their Creator.
- c. There is an eternal life (AFTER-LIFE) with God and an eternal Death (AFTER-DEATH) with the Devil, Satan.

Lessons

Living for the AFTER-LIFE (Heaven)

Living for the AFTER-DEATH (Hell)

GOD'S INVITATION

Living For The AFTER-LIFE (Heaven)

People who believe there is eternal life with the creator and the righteous or eternal death with the devil and the unrighteous attempt to follow some interpretation of God's principles, precepts and commands. God requires a person to be "In Christ" to be acceptable. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV)

The lifestyle of these people will include:

1. Loving, honoring, glorifying, praising and worshiping God as He has directed in His Word
2. Desiring the best for everyone, even their enemies.
3. Providing for needs, the widows, orphans and especially Christians.

Since it is "In Him (Christ) we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins", (Ephesians 1:7) then our primary concern should be in learning how Christ desires us to live. It should be obvious that His commands, teachings and examples are to be found in His Word. One teaching is in the following parable:

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:25-29)

After relating the parable of the "Good Samaritan", Jesus allowed the Pharisee to answer his own question. "The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him'." (Luke 10:37) Jesus told him to do what he knew to do, which was to love his neighbor as himself.

We are also told to "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:1-2) and "If you love me, you will obey what I command." (John 14:15)

There are many **instructions to those In Christ** to follow in becoming imitators of God thus living in the AFTER-LIFE with God.

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

"This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome." (1 John 5:2-3)

To those In Christ John wrote "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light [all things good, things done in the open - love, truth, mercy, kindness, faithfulness]; in him there is no darkness [all thing evil, things done in secrete - hate, envy, false, vengeance, selfishness] at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1:5-7)

"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3)

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." (1 John 1:8-10)

"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false

prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.” (1 John 4:1-3)

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.” (Ephesians 4:14-19)

“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” (Colossians 3:12)

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” (Colossians 3:13)

“Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Colossians 3:14 RSV)

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another.” (Colossians 3:15-16)

“Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” (Colossians 3:17)

“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:5-8)

"In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. (Jude 17-23)

It is clear from the above that those in Christ must grow. Therefore, the critical question is “How do I grow?” in order that my life becomes a mirror of God’s image. What can I do to become more like God continually reflecting a clearer likeness of his essence and nature of love, truth and justice as I grow older?

Questions

1. The first and foremost requirement to inherit eternal life is love and belief in God - God is love.

T. ___ F. ___

2. The love God desires is doing what is best for one’s eternal life.

T. ___ F. ___

3. What continues to cleanse one who is in Christ

a. ___ Fully and completely obeying His commands

b. ___ Assembling together with other Christians

c. ___ The blood of Christ

d. ___ Those in Christ have on sins as all past, present and future sins have been fully forgiven.

4. What does one need to have to bind everything into unity?

- a. ___ Love
- b. ___ Truthfulness
- c. ___ Peace

5. What keeps God's people from being ineffective and unproductive>

- a. ___ Knowledge and perseverance
- b. ___ Self-control
- c. ___ Love
- d. ___ Godliness
- e. ___ All the above

Living for the AFTER-DEATH (Hell)

Those who believe in neither an AFTER-LIFE or AFTER-DEATH or believe that everyone will live eternally with God live by the philosophy of:

1. Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you may die.
2. What is mine is mine. What is yours I will take if I want it.
3. Whoever acquires the most in life wins.
4. I fear no one, God nor man. I AM the one with the power.

Consequently, they follow the action of Adam and Eve by yielding to their desires and doing what they want to do rather than what God desires. God said to them in Genesis 2:16-17 "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." But in Genesis 3:4-6, 13 we read "Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will **not** surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate." ... "And the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?'"

James put it this way in James 1:12-15 "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

Therefore, by the disobedience of Adam and Eve, yielding to their desires, sin entered the world. "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." (Romans 5:12)

But there is hope "For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:19-23)

The following are several references to things God considers sin, lawlessness, rebellion and disobedience. Those who practice such live for the AFTER-DEATH.

Genesis 6:5-6 "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the

thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. (KJV)

Genesis 13:13 “But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.” (KJV)

Genesis 19:4-5 “They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.” (NIV)

Ephesians 5:5 “For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” (NIV)

Hebrews 10:26-31 “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The LORD will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

James 1:19-21 “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore, lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

2 Peter 2:4-11 “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) — then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.”

2 Peter 2:12-17 “But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.”

2 Thessalonians 1:3-10 “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, *which is* manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

Revelation 20:10 "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Revelation 21:8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

1 John 1:10 "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us".

Now there may be lots of debating about exactly the nature of the AFTER-DEATH. Is it literal or figurative, never-ending torment or annihilation and on and on.

Regardless of the nature of the AFTER-DEATH it will be so terrible and so final that no one in his or her right mind would want to be sent there. The eternal residents will be:

- Angles who rebelled
- Devil (Satan)
- Beast
- False Prophet
- Cowardly (fearful)
- Unbelieving
- Abominable
- Murderers
- Liars
- Sexually immoral (fornicators)
- Sorcerers
- Idolaters

The good news is that it is not necessary to leave the land of the dying to enter the land of the dead. Notice God's invitation to Israel in Deuteronomy 30:15-20: "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." (NKJV)

God's desire is for those created in His image (His nature) to be reconciled to Him and have an intimate relationship with Him immediately following their burial into Christ's death. "The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some people understand slowness, but is being patient with you. He does not want anyone to perish, but wants everyone to repent ¹" (2 Peter 3:9). "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" (Romans 5:6-10)

Questions

1. What were the sins of Adam and Eve?
 - a. ___ Eating if the forbidden fruit
 - b. ___ Hiding from God
 - c. ___ Yielding to their desires by disobeying God

¹ Not a mere feeling; it has not the uncertainty of moods and sentiments. It is not a simple change in the weather of the soul. It is a distinct alteration of the focus of the intelligence; it carries with it a movement of the will; in short, it is a revolution in the very ground of the man's being" (*The Pulpit Commentary*, vol. 18, p. 66 quoted in REFLECTIONS #515 Al Maxey, January 3, 2012)

2. One sins when
 - a. ___ Tempted
 - b. ___ Drawn to the temptation
 - c. ___ Yielding to the temptation

3. The result of sin is death?

T. ___ F. ___

4. Who does not have an inheritance in heaven?
 - a. ___ The immoral
 - b. ___ Greedy / idolater
 - c. ___ Impure
 - d. ___ All the above

5. God forgave, spared, the angels who sinned, rebelled against Him.

T. ___ F. ___

6. The residents of the After-Death are:
 - a. ___ Angels who rebelled
 - b. ___ Devil (Satan)
 - c. ___ Liars
 - d. ___ Sexually Immoral (fornicators)
 - e. ___ Cowardly (fearful)
 - f. ___ Unbelieving
 - g. ___ Jews
 - h. ___ All the above
 - i. ___ All the above except g.

God's Invitation to the World

Matt 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (NKJV)

1 Corinthians 2:9-11 "But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God."

Matthew 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."

Mark 1:14-15 Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (NKJV)

Matthew 6:33-34 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

Romans 6:16-19 "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though

you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.

For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”

Acts 4:10-12 “Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

There is No Guarantee of a Tomorrow

The tragedy is that nobody has to lose Heaven and gain Hell. The choice is ours. We are free to determine our own eternal destiny. If Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people then Hell is a place prepared for an unprepared people.

2 Corinthians 6:2 “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

John 15:10 “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.” (KJV)

Conclusion

Those “In Christ” living for the AFTER-LIFE must be aware of temptations constantly set before them by the Devil as there are examples in both the Old Testament and New Testament of God’s children disobeying God and going back into the ways of the world.

Those not “In Christ” who desire to be His Child need to seriously consider what the Bible has told others to do.

Hear – Study diligently and read what the Christ taught for they are the Words of life.

Understand

- All men are sinful having disobeyed God’s righteous ways and commands
- All have sinned and not living according to God’s commands
- One’s sin will result in my eternal death
- One must be forgiven to have eternal life with God
- Christ is the only way for me to be forgiven of all my sins

Believe – Jesus Was and is God

- He came to earth in human flesh as Jesus of Nazareth
- He Lived among men
- He Willingly gave His sinless physical life as the perfect sacrifice for my sins, being crucified
- He Was buried
- God raised Him from the grave on the third day
- He Appeared to hundreds following His resurrection
- He Ascended back to heaven to be with the Father

Repent – Change from sin and disobedience to trust and obedience

Confess – Acknowledge publicly your belief that Jesus is the Son of God.

Seek – Call upon God to forgive you of your sins

Die – Put to death your old, sinful, worldly life

Be Buried – Your sinful life you put to death in the grave of baptism by water immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of

Christ, allowing God to raise you from the grave, following your death and burial, as a new Creation.

Receive – The Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come

Become – As a new Christian God added you as His adopted child to the other children into the Church Christ established.

Live – Continue to live steadfastly and obediently to Christ and the apostles' teachings "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Take action – the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation. (2 Corinthians 6:2 NLT)

Questions

1. God desires all those created in His nature not to perish but to come unto Him.
T. ___ F. ___
2. Man is a slave to the one he chooses to follows - either God, the Father or Satan, the father of evil.
T. ___ F. ___
3. Salvation is found only in Christ
T. ___ F. ___
4. All that God requires of man for him to inherit eternal life is for him to that God exist.
T. ___ F. ___
5. When is the best time to seek salvation?
 - a. ___ After achieving one's goals and settles down
 - b. ___ When he is no longer tempted to sin
 - c. ___ Today

