



Right Questions, Wrong Answers:
A Study of World Religions
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Adult Bible Study - World Religions

Worship Service: 10:15 A.M. (Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 9am)

7305 208th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98053

(425) 868-9404 - www.lhlc.org, pastortodd@lhlc.org



Right Questions, Wrong Answers: A Study of World Religions

• Lesson Eight •

What Will Happen to Us When We Die?

1. A soul goes where it belongs
2. Our bodies wait to be raised and reunited with our souls at the final judgment

Worship

A meditation based Revelation*

Leader: After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

Group: And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Leader: All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

Group: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

Leader: Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know."

Group: And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Leader: Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them."

Group: Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

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Leader: “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!”

Group: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!”

*Revelations 7:9-17; 19:5,6

Prayer: O Lord God, our times are in your loving hands. Through your holy gospel you have granted us everlasting life and have given us reason to face our dying days with confidence. As we turn again to your Word, help us anticipate eagerly the day of your coming and rejoice in the future that you will give us. Grant us a blessed end and take us to be with you in heaven, where we will join the saints and angels to praise you without end. Into your hands we commit ourselves, for you rule all things for our good. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Introduction

Day after day, people die. Death is inescapable. Make death the topic of conversation at your next party, and things will get quiet. Why?

The fear of death is a fear of the unknown. Unlike most things that we learn about through experience, we will have only one experience with death—our own. We cannot talk with people who have died to find out what it’s like. When it comes to understanding death, the other religions of this world flounder completely. Unlike some of their other teachings that they can base on human experience, death is a complete mystery, and any teaching about death must be manufactured through imagination.

Christians have the Word of God, though, which gives them truth about death and eternity. We turn to that Word of God and listen to what God says will happen to us when we die.

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Studying God's Word

A soul goes where it belongs

Read Luke 16:19-31

1. With what attitude toward death did the rich man obviously live his life? (verse 19)
2. With what attitude toward death must poor Lazarus have lived his life? (verses 21 and 22)
3. The pain of hell is far more intense than any suffering that could be experienced on earth. List some of the ways this is demonstrated in this account. (verses 23-30)
4. What comforting things do we hear about heaven in this portion of Scripture? (verses 22- 26)
5. Though it is not pleasing to say that everyone who ends up in hell is ultimately responsible for his or her own suffering, it is true. Why? (verses 29-31)
6. What important lesson for our lives should we take from verses 29 and 31?

Do other religions have a teaching about heaven and hell?

Islam: All will be raised at the day of judgment, and Allah as judge will weigh each person's deeds in the balances. Some will be admitted to paradise, where they will experience joy in a place abounding with beautiful maidens, cool rivers, and lush gardens. Others will be sent to the unending torments of hell.

Judaism: Most Jews do not overly concern themselves with a life after death, choosing to focus on this life. Heaven and hell are seen as Christian terms, though there is mention of places of death and punishment in their writings. Some very religious Jews think of paradise as the reward for righteous lives and think that Jews will inherit this paradise by virtue of their connection to Abraham.

Hinduism: The highest goal of the Hindu is to enter the bliss of being joined to the infinite, the Absolute Being. There is no place of joy or peace, nor is there a place of punishment like hell. Nothing could be worse for a Hindu than to continue on the cycle of rebirth (reincarnation).

Buddhism: Nirvana is not a place but a state of being. It is a condition beyond thought, feelings, and will. The more liberal Buddhists teach that there is a paradise of pleasure. This paradise is seen as a place in which all obstacles are removed and a person can experience complete enlightenment. There is no hell in Buddhism, simply the potentially unending cycle of rebirth.

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His Word in My Life – Option 1

Orthodox Jews, the largest branch of Judaism, do have some hope for a life after this one, though it doesn't seem to be very well defined. Reform Jews, a branch of Judaism that is popular in the United States, seem to have little concern for life after death. They choose to focus their energy on making this world a better place to live.

1. Agree or disagree: The religion of the Reform Jews is more practical than Christianity.
2. What could you say to your Jewish friend who doesn't really care about what happens after death?

His Word in My Life – Option 2

Buddhists, Hindus, and New Age proponents who espouse much of Hindu thought see death as but the gate to another life. In that new life, they believe they will be rewarded or punished according to their actions in the previous life. They may come back in a different caste of society (reincarnation); they may even come back as animals (transmigration). Though they would prefer not to go through the endless series of rebirths, they are confident that they will make better use of their next opportunities.

1. Why is this teaching so seductive? What makes it so destructive?
2. List some ways in which the ideas of karma and reincarnation are making inroads into everyday thought (and even into our thought patterns and speech).

His Word in My Life – Option 3

Some religions condemn Christianity because it not only teaches the existence of a hell, but it describes hell as suffering that knows no end.

How would you lovingly respond to someone's arguments against hell?

Those who have rejected the grace of God in Christ Jesus and have chosen to trust in themselves and their merits will go to hell. Those who cling to Jesus' blood and righteousness will go to heaven to be comforted in the presence of their Savior. Paradise will be their home forever. Other world religions either deny a physical existence after death, or they construct some system of works by which a person can be sure of bliss in the hereafter.



Our bodies wait to be raised and reunited with our souls at the final judgement

Read John 5:24-30

1. What visible miracle of power will the Lord Jesus perform at the final judgment? (verse 28)
2. In verse 24 Jesus has made it clear that life is given through faith and not by works. How can we reconcile that thought with verse 29, in which we are told that those who have done good will rise to live?
3. In what ways have all nations been blessed through Abraham? (verses 8 and 9)
4. How do righteousness before God and eternal life come to us? (verse 14)

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-53.

1. What will God do for the believers that are raised from the dead? (verses 35-44)
2. Our new, spiritual bodies will be far superior to our physical bodies. In what ways? (verses 42-49)
3. How long will it take for the Lord to give each believer this new body? (verses 51 and 52)
4. Evaluate this statement: In my next life, I will have a glorified body.

What do other religions teach about man's eternal destiny?

Islam: Those who have submitted to Allah and have lived in accord with the Five Pillars can hope to find a merciful judge when all are raised at the end. If Allah is merciful to them, they will enter paradise and live there forever. Those who have not submitted to Allah and whose good works don't outweigh their evil works will suffer in the torments of hell.

Judaism: Most Jews are not all that concerned about their eternal destinies. If there is a heaven, the Jews who have loved the Lord and their neighbor will certainly inherit it.

Hinduism: The soul of a Hindu continues to transmigrate from one existence to another based on the quality of its previous life. Only when an individual finds release from this cycle of rebirth will he enter into the bliss of being one with Brahman.

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Buddhism: A Buddhist will continue to be reincarnated based on the quality of his previous existence. By following the Noble Eightfold Path, the Buddhist hopes to end the connection with this existence and experience nirvana. Nirvana is radically different from the physical world and is the end of suffering. The worst thing that can happen to a person is to continue the cycle of rebirth.

His Word in My Life – Option 1

Buddhists, Hindus, and members of the New Age Movement all lament what they see as the unending cycle of death and rebirth (called samsara). Their greatest hope is to be freed from the endless cycle of reincarnation and transmigration.

1. How does Christianity answer their wishes in a way more glorious than they could ever hope?
2. What is the appropriate Christian response to the glorious bodies and life awaiting us?

His Word in My Life – Option 2

Evaluate this statement concerning the Last Day: “At his coming all people will rise with their own bodies to answer for their personal deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, but those who have done evil will go into eternal fire.”

“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” The bodies we have now will become what they once were. But that’s by no means God’s final word on the matter. When the Lord Jesus comes again in glory, he will call all bodies forth from their graves to be reunited with their souls. Those who trusted the Lord Jesus will be given new bodies, to prepare them for life with God. No one could have greater reason than we to look for the day of Jesus’ coming! What a contrast to the teachings of other religions. What a message we have to share!



Summary

Martin Luther gave the following advice: “We must henceforth learn a new language and speech in talking of death and the grave when we die. It should not be called dying but being sown for the coming summer and that the churchyard or burial mound is not a mound of dead bodies but an acre full of grain, called God’s grain, which is to sprout again and to grow more beautifully than any man can comprehend” (Plass, What Luther Says, Vol. 1, p. 378). What do you think?

Through death the Lord brings us to life. He gives us life that is so glorious it passes our understanding. Through faith in the Lord Jesus, we will live forever in God’s immediate presence. He will give us glorious bodies, fit for life in God’s glorious kingdom. We have every reason to fall before God in God in thankful worship and to share with others the free gift of life through Jesus’ holy blood.

Life with God

Day 1: Read Revelation 21:1-27. We look forward to seeing the beauty of heaven and to being in the presence of God.

Day 2: Read Revelation 22:1-17. What a glorious gift the Lord gives in allowing us to live with him forever!

Day 3: Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. We long for the heavenly dwelling.

Day 4: Read Luke 20:27-39. The dead rise, for the Lord is the God of the living.

Day 5: Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11. The Lord will raise everyone, and those in Christ will live forever.

Day 6: Read 2 Peter 3:1-18. Live in the light of the Last Day.

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Lesson 8 Readings – What Will Happen to Us When We Die?

Luke 16:19-31 – A soul goes where it belongs

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The Rich Man and Lazarus

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 named 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.

²² "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In hell, 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."

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."

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."

John 5:24-30 – Our bodies wait to be raised and reunited with our souls at the final judgment

New International Version 1984 (NIV1984)

²⁴ "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

²⁸ "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰ By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

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1 Corinthians 15:35-43

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The Resurrection Body

³⁵ But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" ³⁶ How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. ³⁹ All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. ⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. ⁴¹ The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

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