

Heaven and Hell

Advent 3 and 4

Advent 1 – Death

God gave humanity life with possibility of eternal life.

Death enters the world at the Fall; death = realm of the devil.

Jesus conquers death; opens way to eternal life once more.

Therefore for Christians, death = gateway to presence of God.

Advent 2 – Judgement

All will be judged according to how responded to Jesus.

Faith in Jesus, resulting in forgiveness of sins, will result in a positive judgement and entry into God's presence.

Good works are evidence of faith.

Our works will be shown up for what they are; good works will result in a reward

Advent 3 and 4 – Heaven and Hell –the final destination

Big picture

Jewish understanding: 2 ages: this age – messiah comes – new age

Jesus: this age – messiah comes – old age continues but new age begins – messiah returns – old age ends and new age fully comes

Mark 1.15 “The kingdom of God has come near”

Mark 13 the kingdom is to come.

Hell

Word in bible “Hell” translation of Greek “Gehenna”, Hebrew “Gehinnon” – place of child sacrifice.

Place of fire (Mark 9.44); pain and suffering (Matthew 8.12)

Separation from God (Matthew 7.23; 2 Thessalonians 1.9)

Destruction (Phil 3.17-21) or eternal punishment (“eternal destruction” 2

Thessalonians 1.9)?

Hell is not God's will for anyone (1 Timothy 2.4: “who desires all to be saved”)

Place to which evil and the devil will be consigned (Rev 19.20)

But those who chose to side with the Devil also sent there (Rev 21.8)

Heaven

Will we “go to heaven” when we die?

Thief on the cross (Luke 23.43); “In my Father’s house are many mansions..” (John 14.2)

But: “a new heaven and a new earth” (1 Peter 3.13; Rev 21.1)

What will “new heaven and the new earth” be like? – Revelation 21 & 22

21.1 – no sea – chaos destroyed

21.3 – God dwells there (and 21.22; 22.4)

21.4 – no sadness, no death, no pain

21.7 – place of relationship with God – intimate, family

21.11 – beauty

21.16 – large!

21.23 – well lit (and 21.25; 22.5)

21.24 – full of the earth’s glory

21.27 – pure (and 22.3)

Jesus’ pictures:

Banquet (Matthew 8.11)

Wedding feast (Rev 19.9)

Hebrews:

A secure city (Hebrews 11.10)

What will we do?

22.3 – worship

22.5 – reign

Reign?

Genesis 1.27-28 – Man made in God’s image to reign over creation

Lost at Fall

Jesus came to restore; taught, modelled, died and rose to achieve.

Fully realised at his second coming.

Therefore heaven is active and full of vitality – paradise restored (and better?)