

The Path of All Men

Introduction

1. The world would have us believe there are many paths to choose in life, and each are equally valid.
 2. However, Jesus plainly taught the path of all men – **Matthew 7:13-14**
 3. The Bible is clear concerning the two paths of all men, and who takes which.
- I. Time
- A. Humanity
 - a. Man was made upright – **Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:27, 31**
 - i. This is not simply a reflection on man’s nature before the fall corrupted it. This is a universal truth concerning each man’s initial moral state.
 - b. Jesus’ call to be like children reflects their purity – **Matthew 18:3, 6**
 - B. Two Kingdoms
 - a. The Kingdom of Satan
 - i. Paul as an example – **Romans 7:9**
 1. **“But they have sought out many schemes”**
 2. **(vv. 7-8)** – demonstrates the way of seeking contrary to God’s created order, and revelation.
 - ii. Of the Devil – **1 John 3:7-8**
 - iii. The gospel’s purpose is to turn men from Satan’s rule/kingdom to God’s – **Acts 26:16-18** – **“power”** – *exousia*
 - b. The Kingdom of Christ
 - i. When this turn/conversion takes place, there is a deliverance from one kingdom and a transfer to another – **Colossians 1:13-14** – **“power”** – *exousia*
 - ii. Those in Christ are new, freed from sin, and walking in renewed purpose – **2 Corinthians 5:17**
 1. **(vv. 18-19)** – through the ministry of reconciliation, the preaching of the gospel.
 2. **Mark 16:15-16** – hear, believe, repent, confess, baptism.
- II. Death
- A. Death awaits us all – **1 Corinthians 15:21-22; James 2:26**
 - B. The Death of the Innocent
 - a. The innocent die in good standing with God – **Matthew 19:14**
 - b. David’s words imply continued existence, and security – **2 Samuel 12:23** (**cf. Matthew 22:32**)

- C. The Death of the Faithful
 - a. The death of those faithful to the Lord is a blessing – **Psalm 116:15; Revelation 14:13**
 - b. Departure to be with Christ is better than to remain – **Philippians 1:21, 23**
 - D. The Death of the Unfaithful
 - a. The death of the unfaithful is without hope – **2 Peter 2:21-22; 3:9**
 - b. Only expectation of punishment – **Hebrews 10:26-27**
 - E. The Death of the Alien Sinners
 - a. Those who never know God and do not obey the gospel die without hope, and are subject to God’s wrath – **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**
- III. Hades
- A. Many believe that upon death a person goes immediately to heaven or hell. This is not what the bible depicts.
 - a. Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension aid us in understanding this reality – **Acts 2:27, 31**
 - i. **His soul** – went to Hades but was not left there.
 - 1. Greek translation of the Hebrew Sheol.
 - 2. “properly, unseen, i.e. “Hades” or the place (state) of departed souls” (STRONG)
 - ii. **His flesh** – stayed in the tomb but was resurrected and didn’t decay.
 - iii. **Cf. James 2:26** – body separated from spirit is death.
 - iv. After His resurrection He ascended to heaven – **Acts 2:32**
 - b. When we die, our soul goes to Hades, and our flesh sees corruption – **cf. Ecclesiastes 12:7** – returns to the dust.
 - B. The Hadean Divide
 - a. A story Jesus told gives insight into the Hadean realm – **Luke 16:22-23**
 - i. Both were in the same realm – Rich man saw Lazarus – “place of departed souls”
 - ii. Lazarus was in Hades like Jesus – **Acts 2:27**
 - iii. Difference in spiritual relation, and corresponding consequence.
 - b. Paradise (Comfort)
 - i. Jesus called the place He would go upon His death **“Paradise”** – **Luke 23:43**
 - ii. Lazarus went to Paradise in Hades – **Luke 16:22, 25**
 - 1. Carried by the angels – protection, control.
 - 2. Abraham’s bosom – indicative of fellowship w/ the father of faith and belonging to God’s family.

3. Comfort – the result of being in fellowship with God upon death.
- c. Tartarus (Torment)
 - i. Peter demonstrated to his readers God’s ability to preserve and protect the godly, and to punish the ungodly – **2 Peter 2:4, 9**
 1. **“hell”** – “Tartaros (the deepest abyss of Hades)” (STRONG); “the name of the subterranean region, doleful and dark, regarded by the ancient Greeks as the abode of the wicked dead” (THAYER)
 2. Sheol – Hebrew; Hades – translates Sheol to Greek; Tartarus – the Greek counterpart of the Hebrew Sheol/Hades.
 3. This is the part of Hades which men are tormented in until judgment.
 - ii. The rich man was not faithful, and found himself tormented – **Luke 16:22-25**
- d. The Great Gulf
 - i. There is a place prepared for the devil and his angels, and the wicked – **Matthew 25:41**
 1. Implying they are not yet there.
 2. **2 Peter 2:9** – they are reserved under punishment for the day of judgment.
 - ii. Being kept, or reserved means there will be no change, but only consummation of comfort or punishment at the judgment – **Luke 16:26** – neither can cross to the other side.
 1. God keeps the wicked in punishment until judgment where they are cast away for eternity.
 2. God keeps the righteous safe in comfort until they are welcomed home for eternity.

IV. Eternity

A. The End

- a. The Second Coming of Christ
 - i. All die, then there is judgment – **Hebrews 9:27-28**
- b. The Resurrection of the Dead
 - i. **“And the dead in Christ will rise first.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)** – **“in Christ”** is the emphasis of context, but the wicked dead will rise at the same time – **John 5:28-29**

- ii. **1 Corinthians 15:21-24** – in Adam all die, but in Christ there will be a resurrection – ***“Then comes the end.”***
- c. The Transformation of the Righteous
 - i. ***“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”*** (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**)
 - ii. Those who don’t see death will be transformed in an instant – **1 Corinthians 15:51-53**
- d. The End of the World
 - i. The material universe will be destroyed with fire – **2 Peter 3:7, 10**
- B. The Judgment
 - a. ***“he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come”*** (**Acts 24:25**) – Paul to Felix.
 - b. **Matthew 7:21-27** – there will be a separation in that day from those who are faithful to God’s word and those who reject it, building their lives on the sand.
 - c. **Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46** – there will be a separation from sheep and goats, and an invitation into eternal life, and excommunication into eternal punishment.
 - d. Judgment, and the second death – **Revelation 20:11-15**
- C. Eternal Destination
 - a. Heaven
 - i. The eternal destination of those in fellowship with God at their death or at Christ’s coming and judgment.
 - ii. **Revelation 22:1-5** – water of life, God and the Lamb, tree of life, no night, reign forever.
 - b. Hell
 - i. The eternal destination of those not in fellowship with God at their death or at Christ’s coming and judgment.
 - ii. **Revelation 20:14-15, 21:8** – the second death, the lake of fire.
 - iii. **2 Thessalonians 1:9** – separation from God in punishment – ***“away from”*** (NASB)

Conclusion

1. The Bible discloses the path of all men. Though there may be questions we do not have answers to, there are answers we dare not question.
2. Which path are you on?