



New Testament Expositor



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WILL HEAVEN COST TOO MUCH?

Have you stopped to consider if heaven is worth it? Will the cost of heaven be too much. Let me start as we begin these thoughts by saying: No amount of wealth, possessions, prestige, honor or power will come close to comparing with the joys of eternal peace in heaven to those that are obedient to God. The opposite is true as well, that no amount of tragedy, pain, sorrow or hurt will be worth losing your soul. Jesus said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'? Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:25-33 Jesus in this passage makes it clear that if He is to be followed, sacrifice will be demanded. Jesus expects His followers to put Him first and foremost in all things of life. This becomes the challenge as we consider living holy and sanctified to Christ or live for the joys and pleasures of our earthly life. The reasons that heaven will be worth it are many.

One of the greatest assurances that heaven is real and a place that people should want to be is the life of Jesus Himself. He is the Son of God and was sent to become a sacrifice for sins that others through Him might have eternal life (John 3:16). Jesus was focused on this His entire earthly life, often speaking about doing the will of His Father in Heaven. Jesus' focus was to get back to His Father. It is evident that He could have had all things perishable while He was here on this earth. Matthew 4:1-10 and Luke 4:1-13 reads of Jesus being tempted by Satan. The temptations offered by Satan were not of God or things of righteousness. They were of and for worldly pleasures (1 John 2:15-17). Satan, in one of these temptations, offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Satan stated, regarding Jesus having all these kingdoms, "All this authority I will give to You, and their glory" (Luke 4:6). Jesus responded, telling Satan to get behind Him (4:8). All earthly power, prestige, possession and wealth were Jesus' to take. Yet He did not accept. Why? Because of the place to which He would return when He accomplished the Father's will.

Another indicator that a better dwelling place awaits is Jesus' response to those who hurt Him physically and emotionally. 1 Peter 2:23 states, "Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return: when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously". Christ never struck back at those that hurt Him. He was mocked, ridiculed, spit on, flogged and crucified. Yet in all this He did not seek revenge or to get back at others in a harmful way as a way of returning evil. His actions were without sin. He opened not His mouth (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus had the will of the Father to complete in His earthly life. He couldn't and wouldn't respond to how others acted with the same fleshly mindset of His enemies but responded in a way that never brought sin upon His life. Jesus never asserted Himself in a worldly way of dominance and power but, through humility and direction, He longed to return to the glory He had with His Father (John 17:5).

Another reason to be assured of heaven being worth our sacrifice is seen in the life of the Apostle Paul. His view on life was to get to heaven regardless of what he faced while living on earth. In Philippians 1:23-24, Paul states, "For I am hard pressed between the two (life and death), having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful to you". Paul was ready to go whenever the Lord would call him. He without a shadow of a doubt recognized the glory that awaits the faithful. He made incredible sacrifice in his life, facing jail and near-death experiences on numerous occasions. He relates these trials in 2 Corinthians 11: 22-33). Not only does he discuss his suffering but also how he has great concern for all the church. The suffering did not move Paul to be removed from a life in Christ and to God but, he boldly proclaimed Christ and Him crucified to all those he encountered. He exclaimed, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Finally, the worth of heaven is seen in the promise of God. God is the Creator of all (Genesis 1:1) and His creation is good (Genesis 1:31). Through sin, man has separated himself from God, but God gave an avenue to return to Him. God has promised eternal life! "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God has never lied. From Genesis to Revelation God reveals His mystery of salvation for all people in all truth. In Numbers 23:19, Moses states, "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make good?" God has always

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Put Your Name On It The Signature of the Cartouche

(All pictures by David R. Kenney and should be so designated unless otherwise stipulated)

“If you want it, you had better put your name on it!” “If you want me to know this is your term paper, then you had better put your name on it.” “If you don’t want a zero on your exam, then you had better put your name on it!” Putting one’s name on something denotes a claim of ownership, a concept so prevalent that it really does not need much explanation. The same is true for the ancient world of the Egyptians too.

Have you ever gone on a trip only to return wishing you knew more about where you were going before you got there? Well, that was a re-occurring thought while I was in Egypt and continues as I work on these writings. One of the things I wish I could have spent more time preparing for was a better understanding of the cartouche which designates ownership. As I looked at monuments, obelisks, temples, statues, and other ancient artifacts from Egypt I wish I would have understood that the cartouche was basically the signature of an individual. Obviously, seeing cartouches repeatedly, I began to recognize a couple of them on my own, e.g., Ramses II. Still, if I had a solid reference work on cartouches and a working knowledge of some of the more frequent ones, I would have benefited more from my journey to Egypt. But what exactly is a cartouche?

The word *cartouche* is of French origin, but the Egyptian term is *shenu*. It seems strange referring to Egyptian items with French terms. The term *cartouche* originated around the turn of the 19th century with Napoleon’s French soldiers who had invaded Egypt. They noticed a peculiar and re-occurring form of hieroglyphics throughout Egypt that was encircled in a shape like the bullet or cartridge, a *cartouche*, for their rifles. The vividness of the comparison led to the adoption of the term *cartouche*.

Originally the shape was believed to be more of a circle since *shenu* referred to a ring (“that which is encircled”). But this changed over time: “Early in Egyptian history, however, the form of the *shen* ring was lengthened in order to hold the increased number of hieroglyphics resulting from longer royal names and fuller orthography. In this way, the *shen* continued to be used as a sign with its own meanings while the cartouche became the standard holder of the royal name” (Wilkinson 195). The encirclement was a rope which formed the distinctive shape. This is comparable to our modern-day signature. For example, President Donald J. Trump has a very distinctive signature that is readily recognized even at a distance. The *cartouche* served as a signature of pharaohs and other major leaders of ancient Egypt.

One needs to be cautious about assuming that a *cartouche* indicates actual ownership at the time of construction. For example, Ramses II put his *cartouche* on many things, but we also have an example in Tanis of his *cartouche* covering a prior’s dignitary’s *cartouche*. While Ramses II was known as a great building or expander of

the empire of Egypt, he was certainly not the only one with such a reputation. For example, Thutmose III was called “Thutmose the Great” or more recently the “Napoleon of Egypt” because of his conquests and expansion of Egypt. In fact, it was not uncommon for pharaohs to seek ways to expand the size, scope and power of Egypt to please their gods/goddesses. And when they did this, they sought to put obelisks and other monuments in their temples to document their feats. And with that documentation included their *cartouche*, i.e., they put their name on it!

Overwritten Cartouche



Notice the Hieroglyphic of a Bird Being Overridden (Rameses II Cartouche Is to the Left)
So, When Was This Obelisk Originally Made and Where?
Photograph by David R. Kenney, Tanis, June 3, 2024.



Cartouche of Hatshepsut Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut, Deir al-Bahari, Egypt.
Photograph by David R. Kenney, May 31, 2024.



Cartouche of Amenhotep II
Karnak Temple,
Luxor, Egypt.
Photograph by David R. Kenney,
June 1, 2024.

SOURCES:

Silverman, David P. editor. *Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Tyldesley, Joyce. *The Pharaohs*. London: Quercus, 2019.

Wilkinson, Richard H. *Reading Egyptian Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Egyptian Painting and Sculpture*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1992.

Doorway To Another Life

Death is viewed by many as a bitter end, an obstacle that must be met that will conclude life as they know it. They fear death and abhor the unknown that is beyond the grave. Some believe when life ends all that remains is to rot in the ground and to be eaten by worms. What a sad view of death and what lies beyond it! For the faithful Christian, death is simply the final step through a doorway into another, drastically improved life. A better life prepared by Jesus for those who love and obey His commands (Jn. 14:1-23).

Through my travels, I have had the pleasure of going to several different countries outside of our own. It is an awe-inspiring experience to walk through the portal of a plane in the US and in just a few hours, walk out those same doors into an entirely different world. To start in Pittsburgh and the next stop Honduras, it is simply a shocking experience! I envision the step into eternity to be eerily familiar to this. An immediate shock, but once the step is taken great joy is the result. As Stephen stepped through the doorway of death into eternity, he expressed shock at what

his persecutors planned to do and seeing Jesus standing at the right hand of God's throne, but can you imagine the overpowering joy he must have experienced after being stoned to death (Acts 7:54-60)? What about the prophets of God who had given their lives in service to Him? They must have been briefly shocked at their mortal demise, but I doubt they thought of it afterwards when they obtained their Heavenly reward (Heb. 11:32-40). Similarly, Jesus must have been shocked at the baseness and sinful actions of those who put Him on the cross, but his shock clearly turned to joy. We must consider Jesus and His willingness to endure pain and suffering for the ultimate joy that would be its result (Heb. 12:1-3). To overcome the initial shock, remember where your citizenship truly is (Phil. 3:12-4:1). Remind yourself daily that you are just a pilgrim passing through and life is simply a step into eternal joy; shock and fear will pass, and we can finally focus on the joy it ultimately brings.

We have a tradition after marriage that I find interesting, yet insightful to our current discussion. When a newly married couple return to their home or room after exchanging their vows, the husband usually carries his new bride through the doorway of their abode. I am unaware of its origin or purpose, but I find it extremely symbolic. The new couple begin a new life as they walk through that doorway, one they both hope will be full of happiness and affection. When we approach death's doorway, why do we enter it with dread and loathing? Jesus is the doorway, and He provided his life so we could have a more abundant eternity (Jn. 10:7-10). The records in Scripture are there for an example to us, I beg you to examine Paul and his view of death. Did he fear it? Despise it? Abhor it? No, he embraced and rejoiced in it (Phil. 1:18-30). He longed for it (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Why? He realized something we must also grasp, to get to Heaven we must boldly cross the threshold of death and enter the doorway to another life. There is no other way to get there, barring us being alive for Jesus' return (1 Thes. 4:13-18). There is a famous song lyric, "Everybody wants to go to Heaven, but nobody wants to die." If music artists can understand this, why do Christians not? I beg you to look at death differently and leave behind your resentment and disdain for it. Instead, long for it and enter its doorway with a smile on your face! It will be the greatest day of your life, not the worst.

Both Enoch and Elijah walked with God. Yet, what did their walks with God entail? Though they did not face death, they still walked through the doorway from this life into another. With Enoch, little information is provided, the Scriptures tell us, "Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24). Yet, with Elijah, much more detail is provided. As you read the text in Second Kings chapter two, who seems to be more concerned of the Lord taking the great prophet? Elijah or his right-hand man Elisha? If you examine it closer, Elisha seemed more disgruntled about the upcoming event than the man who would experience it. Notice, Elisha upon being informed God would take up his master by the sons of the prophets, told him to be

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made true on His promises. In Him through Jesus, man is promised eternal life in heaven. “In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began” (Titus 1:2).

Blessed assurance is found in the love of God and the love of the Savior Jesus Christ. Evidence is overwhelming that Jesus and Paul both lived on this earth with view of the promise of God. Jesus, who came from God to be the sacrificial lamb, gave all to return to Father. Paul devoted his life experiencing pain and agony to get to the eternal home of the soul that is in the presence of our Creator and Lord and well as the faithful saints. Have you considered the cost? Your soul is the most valuable thing you will ever possess. Heaven is the greatest residence you can ever have. Will you consider the cost and give yourself to Christ?

Scott. Judge (Minister– Elm Grove Church of Christ)

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quiet not once, but twice (2 Kgs. 2:3, 5)! Elisha yelled for Elijah when he saw what happened, tore his clothes, and then asked where God was before he parted the river Jordan (2 Kgs. 2:12-14). What about Elijah? He seemed calm, and collected. He welcomed being with God instead of walking in this cruel world another day. As you walk with God, prepare yourself for that step from this plane of existence into the next.

What should be our thought process and focus as we close in on the doorway of death? Hezekiah and Samson are who I call to attention to answer this unique query. When Isaiah told Hezekiah that death was imminent, what was Hezekiah’s thought process and focus (1 Kgs. 20:1-11)? The great king fell on his knees and asked God to remember his faithfulness and pure heart. Instead of focusing on funeral arrangements, will and testaments, line of succession, or anything else; let us instead speak with our loving Father and focus on our life of service to Him. God should be our main thought when death calls, for our Lord provided us the means and avenue for us to cross into the next life to be with Him (1 Pet. 1:3-5). It is true, Samson may not have been the most faithful of servants God ever had, but have you? I find comfort in the ending to Samson’s story because many of us may not, in all truthfulness, be able to claim faithfulness to God like Hezekiah. Maybe you are more like Samson and you have been unfaithful to Him, what then? (Judg. 16:23-31). Like Samson, you cannot change the past, but you can change the immediate future that remains. Labor while there is still time (Matt. 20:1-16). Repent of your sins and be faithful for the days that are left! What ought to be the last thoughts you have? Whether you have been a Christian for thirty years or thirty minutes, only through Him can the step into Heaven be taken.

The doorway into another life may be initially shocking, but the joy to come will far outweigh that. We ought to walk our lives in service to God with confidence. Face this life’s ending with a calm, collective, and peace that surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4:7). Let your final moments be full of God and remembering what He has done for you in this life so that you can be with Him in the next. “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5). This promise is true in this life, death’s doorway, and through to eternity. There is no doubt in God’s faithfulness, the question resides with ours. Use every day you have to be faithful to our Lord so when death comes may you enter with all confidence like Hezekiah and Samson. Not always perfect, but always faithful till the end.

(Brandon Foresha– Minister, Kittanning Church of Christ)

AREA EVENTS UPCOMING

September 7-10, Gospel Meeting, Bill Watkins, Church of Christ 16150 Saint Clair Avenue, East Liverpool, OH 43920

September 13, Mountain Lectureship, 9:00-2:00, Paintsville Church of Christ, 412 11th St, Paintsville, KY 41240

September 14-19, Gospel Meeting, Noah West, Wilson Ridge Church of Christ, 669 Wilson Ridge Rd. Grafton, WV 26354

September 19-20, Rest for the Soul, Autumn of Spiritual Awakening, John J. Deberry, Jr and Matt Vega, 1130 Fishinger Road Columbus, OH 43221

September 21-24, Gospel Meeting, Dan Jenkins, Newport Church of Christ, 25 Woodland Dr. Newport Oh 45768, 740-473-1298

September 22-24, Gospel Meeting, DJ Smith, Long Valley Church of Christ Mountaineer Highway, Littleton WV 26581

September 26-27, Youth Rally, Lonnie Jones, Hosted by Sunrise Church of Christ, 2203 Butchers Bend Rd. Mineral Wells, WV 26150

September 27, Lectureship, Faith is the Victory, Craig Matheny, DJ Kessinger, Peter Ray Cole, Oakland Church of Christ 1300 Memorial Dr. Oakland, MD 21550

October 5-8, Gospel Meeting, Phil Grear, Pine Grove Church of Christ 7389 Teays Valley Road, Scott Depot, WV 25560

October 11, Praise Him Lectureship, Elm Grove Church of Christ 8155 Chenoweth Fork Rd. Piketon OH 45661, 740-434-8721

October 17, Soup and Singing, 6pm, Rosemar Church of Christ 595 Rosemar Rd. Parkersburg WV 26104

October 18, Fall Camp, West Virginia Christian Youth Camp, 425 Youth Camp Dr. Pennsboro WV 26415, 304-659-3244

October 19-23, Victory Lectureship, West Virginia School of Preaching, 4th St. and Willard Ave. Moundsville WV, 26041

November 8, Lubeck Men’s Day, Doug Pell, 9:00am- 2:00pm Lubeck Church of Christ RSVP-@www.lubeckcoc.org or call 304-863-6504