

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament – Session 1 Lesson 7

Heaven and Earth Reunited

Main Idea

Jesus succeeds where Israel failed.

Exercise

Did you ever have a solution to a problem come from an unexpected place?

Core questions

1. What is the significance of the temple being transferred from a place to a person?

Background Notes

Quick Review – The Heaven and Earth campaign

- 1) The intended plan
 - a) **The Good Earth:** Heaven and Earth joined at the Garden
 - b) Humans and all living things will, over time fill the earth
 - c) **The City and the Garden:** Heaven overlaps with the entire earth which is filled with cities and gardens
- 2) The interrupted plan
 - a) **The Good Earth:** Heaven and Earth joined at the Garden
 - b) **The Rebellion:** Heaven and Earth separated
 - c) **Faith and the Law:** Heaven and Earth joined at the Tabernacle
 - d) **The Kingdom Arrives:** Heaven and Earth joined within Jesus
 - e) **Already and Not Yet:** Heaven and Earth joined in His Image-bearers
 - f) **The City and the Garden:** Heaven overlaps with the entire earth which is filled with cities and gardens
- 3) The charge

Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:15, 22-23 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish ... birds ... livestock ... every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. ... And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth... God saw all that he had made, and it was very good”... The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ... Then the Lord God made a woman from the side he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

Already and not yet: Heaven and Earth joined in His Image-bearers

Matthew 6:10 ... your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven ...

Acts 2:3-4 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

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- 4) After Jesus ascended to heaven, he told the disciples to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus began the work of bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth. That work would now be continued by the disciples who would now be empowered by the very Spirit of God that empowered Jesus.
- 5) As we wait in this in-between time, God is at work through the Holy Spirit. The task that lies before us is to join Him in His work. The prayer He gave for us to say asks that His kingdom be brought to earth, the Kingdom of justice and mercy.

Malachi 6:8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

- 6) Empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it is our opportunity to (re: Appendix 3: Covenant Affirmations)
 - a) bring His justice and mercy on earth (ECC How We Serve, Serve Locally: Start & Strengthen Churches, Make & Deepen Disciples, Love Mercy Do Justice)
 - b) to look after the widows, orphans, the helpless, and the marginalized;
 - c) to have compassion;
 - d) to not lie about others;
 - e) Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts;
 - f) bring the good news of Jesus to all.
- 7) In the now-broken earth, many people think of human civilization as a corruption and pollution of the earth, that the earth was only meant to be pristine – as it was before humans started to mess it up.
 - a) The attitude in parts of the church to spiritualize their mission (gnostic dualism: spirit stuff is good, physical stuff is bad) which was enhanced by the dispensational theology kept the church from influencing the direction of the pantheistic theology in the environmental movement (Mother Earth).
- 8) When we use our God-given capabilities to join God in His kingdom building, that is good. Many things that we design, create and build are inherently good. But our sin causes us to misuse every good thing.
- 9) When we were charged with filling and subduing the earth, it did not mean that we were to simply expand the Garden of Eden. God had given us many tremendous creative abilities and gifts to make the things of civilization:
 - i) spiritual gifts for the purpose of building one another up;
 - ii) gifts of artistry and craftsmanship to make music and
 - iii) organizational gifts to make governments and businesses
 - iv) and much more
 - (1) some church traditions keep the church separate from the rest of the world in various degrees from total separation (Amish) to simply not getting involved in government or any non-church organizations.
- 10) It is undeniable that, despite the corruption we see, God has provided us an abundance of creative skills for displaying His transcendence and glory in our art, technology, engineering and sciences. He has also given us social and political skills to create human public and private institutions that can organize our abilities to do good.
- 11) It does not take much observation to notice the corruption that has permeated our society. It can seem hard to determine if we have misused more than we properly used the gifts and abilities God has given us. Nevertheless, as God's co-regents the sacred obligation He gave us to join Him in the restoration of the earth was not removed by our rebellion.

Background to Revelation

- 12) Understanding meanings
 - a) The function of revelation
 - i) Revelation means revealing, not concealing. Apocalypse means revelation, not catastrophe

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- ii) The function of Revelation is missional, to sustain the people of God in times of crisis as they battle the forces of evil. That context helps us to understand the metaphors and imagery in Revelation.
- iii) Revelation borrows much of its figurative language and symbolic imagery from Genesis and rest of the OT. The figurative language and symbolic imagery is not meant to hide things like secret codes but to uncover the full nature of spiritual realities ... Revelation is about revealing. ... If we try to parse things too much or find ourselves digging for hidden codes or meanings then we are probably going in the wrong direction.
- b) Use of metaphors and imagery
 - i) The purpose of a metaphor is to create a direct comparison between two seemingly different things, allowing readers to see hidden similarities and deepen the meaning of both. Metaphors are used in literature to create vivid descriptions, enhance writing with imagery, and make complex thoughts easier to understand. (<https://literarydevices.net/metaphor/>)
 - ii) By bringing together what we know and what we don't know through analogy, metaphorical thinking strikes the spark that ignites discovery (<https://www.wyliecomm.com/2021/04/what-is-the-purpose-of-a-metaphor/>)
 - iii) Imagery is a literary device that refers to the use of figurative language to evoke a sensory experience or create a picture with words for a reader. By utilizing effective descriptive language and figures of speech, writers appeal to a reader's senses of sight, taste, smell, touch, and sound, as well as internal emotion and feelings. Therefore, imagery is not limited to visual representations or mental images, but also includes physical sensations and internal emotions. (<https://literarydevices.net/imagery/>)
- c) Understanding hyperbole –
 - i) Hyperbole occurs often in the Bible as well, but our detachment from biblical culture and language makes us prone to miss this figure of speech and take it literally instead. As a result, we misunderstand yet another biblical text. We may need help identifying hyperboles and distinguishing them from literal statements of fact. (<https://deeperstudy.com/hyperbole-and-overstatement-as-tools-for-deeper/>)
 - ii) Principles for identifying hyperbole
 - (1) If taken literally, is the statement impossible?
 - (2) If taken literally, does it conflict with what Jesus says elsewhere?
 - (3) If taken literally, does the teaching conflict, not with what Jesus teaches, but with His behavior?
 - (4) If taken literally, does the statement conflict with the teaching of the Old Testament?
 - (5) If taken literally, does it conflict with the teaching of the New Testament?
 - (6) Does the gospel writer in a parallel passages understand the statement in a non-literal way?
 - (7) Does the statement uses universal language, with no exceptions?
- d) Figurative language of Revelation
 - i) Revelation is a prophetic critique against the imperial idolatry (civil religion) and injustice (military, economic, political, and religious oppression) of any empire or any nation. Babylon is used to reference Rome in particular, but also any empire. Babylon represents the system of empires and the spiritual forces behind them.
 - ii) Revelation uses satirical imagery about human empires, portraying Rome as a tawdry harlot on a horrific beast, whose seven heads recall Rome's traditional seven hills (Rev 17:9).
 - iii) Rome conquers the nations and threatens the saints, while seducing the peoples of the world with dazzling prospects of commercial profits and lives of luxury.
 - iv) John's original readers faced a spectrum of challenges. Some had to endure local hostility against the church, some were in danger of assimilating into the dominant Greco-Roman culture, and some were in danger of complacency growing out of their economic prosperity
 - v) Jesus does not win by military might but by sacrificial death, persuasion, and judgment

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- vi) The beasts of Babylon have been present in multiple times and places. The dragon is “that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan.” The beast from the sea is an incarnation of Satanic power (persecution, deception, and idolatry). The beast from the land, functions primarily to promote the worship of the first beast and promotes the imperial cult
- vii) The mark of the beast might be an imperial slogan, seal, or image.
- viii) War, famine, pestilence, death, injustice, and rebellion are all portrayed as human evils rather than cosmic events.
- ix) The vision of a “new heaven and new earth” does not mean the destruction and replacement of the material world but its transformation,
- x) The image of humanity among the stars calls to mind Genesis 1, 12:1-3, Psalm 8, and Proverbs 8.

13) Revelation Finishes what Genesis Started

- a) Earth Created, recreated Gen 1:1 Rev 21:1
- b) Sun, moon, stars Gen 1:14-16 Rev 6:12; Rev 8:12
- c) Sun governs Day, no need of sun Gen 1:16 Rev 21:23
- d) Darkness called night, no night Gen 1:5 Rev 22:5
- e) Waters called seas, no more seas Gen 1:10 Rev 21:1
- f) river to bless earth, new earth Gen 2:10-14 Rev 22:1-2
- g) Entrance of sin, end of sin Gen 3 Rev 21, Rev 22
- h) Curse pronounced, no more curse Gen 3:14-17 Rev 22:3
- i) Death entered, no more death Gen 3:19 Rev 21:4
- j) Cherubim first, last mentioned Gen 3:24 Rev 19:4
- k) Man driven out of Eden, restored Gen 3:24 Rev 22
- l) Tree of life blocked, restored Gen 3:24 Rev 22:14
- m) Sorrow enters, no more sorrow Gen 3:17 Rev 22:4
- n) Marriage of First Adam, of last Adam Gen 2:18-23 Rev 19

14) A Whole New Vague Creation (<https://bibleproject.com/articles/new-heaven-new-earth/>)

- a) “John’s visions leave most of our questions about the new creation unanswered—and that’s not a bad thing. John’s goal wasn’t to satisfy our curiosity about the new world, but to instill confidence that the creation would be reborn just as Jesus was resurrected from the dead. This is the hope of the story of the Bible: God’s domain and our domain will one day completely unite. All things will be made new. Death will be replaced with life. The whole earth will be a recreation of the garden, and the glory of the temple will cover it. Every nation will be blessed through the power of the resurrected Jesus, and God’s own personal presence will permeate every square inch of the new creation.”

15) Terms not found in Revelation

- a) The following concepts of not in Revelation but are often related to it.
 - i) 2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements (stoichea- core elements) will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare (uncovered).
 - (a) Refers to Isaiah 34:1-4 – the stoichea refers to rebel spiritual beings who oversee the earth. In pre-modern thinking, there were no boundaries between what we call the natural and the supernatural. The “heavenly hosts” referred simultaneously to the stars and the spiritual beings they represented.
 - (b) The stoichea (core elements) will be burned up (uncovered). Refers to Isaiah 34:1-4 – the stoichea refers to rebel spiritual beings who oversee the earth. The phrase often translated as “elemental spirits” in some English versions of the Bible corresponds to the Greek term “stoicheia” (στοιχεῖα). In various contexts, “stoicheia” can be rendered as “elemental principles,” “basic principles,” “rudiments,” or “elemental spiritual forces.” Scholars note that the word can convey the idea of foundational elements of the physical universe-such as fire, water, earth, and air-or the concept of elementary forms of religious

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teaching. In certain New Testament passages, however, the term takes on a spiritual or demonic connotation, referring to hostile supernatural powers opposed to the truth found in God. (https://biblehub.com/q/whatDefines_elemental_spirits.htm)

- (2) 1 Thes 4:13-18. The “rapture” is misunderstood as taking the believers out of the earth, but this word represents a delegation that goes out to meet a king that is arriving in order to escort him into the city. (cp. Acts 28:15; Matt 25:6)
- (3) 1 Jn 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn 1:7 The antichrist refers to anyone who does not confess Jesus is from God.

The City and the Garden: heaven and earth rejoined

Revelations 21:1-4 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

- i) In Genesis, the sea referred to the unordered waters, the waters of chaos, from which God formed the land, rivers, and lakes. So the reference, to “no longer any sea,” is using imagery to say that there will be no more disorder.
- b) Our final destiny is not to a disembodied existence, but to a new, **transformed** body, transformed in the way that Jesus was when he was resurrected. Earth itself will also be **transformed**, with its corruption being removed, not **back** into a Garden of Eden, but into the earth as it was meant to be, **filled** and civilized, with a new Jerusalem being brought from heaven to earth. We are not being sent to heaven; **heaven** is coming to us.
- c) Knowing we are moving to this end; in the present age we can be motivated to **express** our hope by **living** out our hope as in mentioned in The Lord’s Prayer. This encourages us to do what we can to help **usher** in God’s kingdom now, if only in part. We do not need to wait hopelessly as if there is nothing we can do.
- d) When Jesus was resurrected, his **transformed** body still bore **resemblance** to his old body, it even kept the wounds of the crucifixion. In the same way, we should also expect that just as our **transformed** bodies will **resemble** who we are now, that the **transformed** earth will **resemble** the earth as it is now. The transformation will be a healing of earth and our bodies, rather a destruction of the corruptions within.
- e) Just as God is **presently** glorified by the **vitality** and the flourishing of life on earth, we should expect that such vitality and flourishing should continue. Just as we are **presently** given **gifts** and abilities to build each other up now, we should expect the same later, although in a new, uncorrupted context. We **glorify** God when we, as a **flourishing** community, can express our God-given gifts without restriction and without the impediment of sin and corruption.

Daniel 12:2-3 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

- i) Sleep refers to the existence of humans without a body. To have just an immaterial essence is to not be fully human. Whether righteous or unrighteous, we will all receive a resurrection body.

Heaven and Hell: Present and future reality

- 16) Heaven and Hell are present, not just future realities

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- a) Hell is a present reality. More people have died at the hands of other humans in the last century than in all of human history.
- b) Heaven is a present reality. (Col 1:13-14; Eph 2:4-6). Those who are in Christ are made alive with Christ, raised with Christ, seated with Christ
 - i) Colossians 1:13-14 - 13 For he **has rescued** us from the dominion of darkness and **brought us** into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
 - ii) Ephesians 2:4-6 - 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God **raised us up** with Christ and **seated us with him** in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

17) The Real Bible Story

- a) Reference Tim Mackie video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykH8E9wTCcQ> and podcast series <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/series/heaven-hell/>. (Re: Appendix 2 and slideshow “The Real Bible Story”)
- b) Current understanding of most people: Much of what we think is based on misunderstanding of what Bible says. Many Acceptance to heaven is based on “password moment” something you did/said right: sinner’s prayer, baptism, etc. People reject God/Bible based on those misunderstandings
- c) Hell is where God’s rule is not carried out. If the shape of our life is away from God’s grace then death will end with what we want.
- d) If the shape of our life is away toward God’s grace then death will end with what we want. Eternal life (heaven) is also something that can begin now. Heaven is a future continuation of what we experience now.

18) The concept of Hell is confused because that word is used to translate 5 different Hebrew and Greek words:

- a) Sheol (שְׁאֹל) –Hebrew word often translated as “hell” or “the grave”. It simply means “the place of the dead,” the shadowy realm where departed souls go.
 - i) In Old Testament times, both the righteous and the wicked went to Sheol after death – it was the general dwelling of souls, without full distinction of reward or punishment yet. For example, the patriarch Jacob expected to go down to Sheol mourning his son (Genesis 37:35), and King David spoke of “making my bed in hell [Sheol]” (Psalm 139:8) – referring to the grave or death.
 - ii) Sheol is often described in poetic language: a dark, silent pit or place of shadowy existence, abyss, a hungry beast with an open mouth that swallows people, emphasis on gloom, silence and decay. There are hints, however, that the wicked experience anguish in Sheol and the righteous have hope beyond it (e.g. “God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave [Sheol]” – Psalm 49:15). While specifics are sparse, the OT portrays Sheol both as a place of restored fellowship (being gathered to one’s people, Genesis 49:33) and as a place of judgment (the wicked “fall” there).
- b) Hades (ᾅδης) –Greek term equivalent to Sheol. Refers to the unseen world of the dead – essentially, the “grave” or intermediate state. Hades is a temporary holding place for departed souls. But after Jesus’ resurrection, believers have the promise of going immediately into God’s presence (Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 5:8), so Hades becomes primarily the abode of the unrighteous dead.
 - i) (Luke 16:23) Jesus describes a rich man suffering torment in hades after death, “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments” (Luke 16:23 KJV).
- c) Gehenna (γέεννα) –Gehenna is derived from the Hebrew Ge-Hinnom, meaning Valley of Hinnom, which is just outside Jerusalem.
 - i) It was the site of child were given as burnt sacrifices to false gods (2 Chronicles 28:3, Jeremiah 19:2-6). Jesus picked up this vivid imagery: He warned of the danger of “Gehenna

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fire” (Matthew 5:22) where “the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:43-48), where soul and body are destroyed (Mat 19:28).

- ii) This concept most closely represents what we call hell - the final state of unbelievers.
- iii) Gehenna - the valley of Hinnom is mentioned in 11 verses. Jer 7:32-33 “Therefore, behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when it will no longer be called Topheth, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of the Slaughter; for they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place. The dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the sky and for the beasts of the earth; and no one will frighten them away.’” Idol worship will bring judgment. See also Jer 19:6, Is 66:24
 - (1) Topheth (2 Kings 23:10) as a place of burnt offerings, sulphur
 - (2) Fires that end in destruction
 - (3) Called the Valley of Slaughter
- d) “Tartarus” *ταρταρόω* (2 Peter 2:4). In Greek mythology, Tartarus was a deep, abyss-like prison for the worst offenders. Peter uses it to describe where fallen angels are cast down to be held for judgment (KJV reads “cast them down to hell”). It’s essentially a special case, referring to demonic imprisonment.
 - i) Abyss=Tartarus? – Tartarus is not eternal or place of eternal judgment. Meaning is uncertain.
- e) The Lake of Fire (*λίμνη πῦρ*) – This phrase appears in the Book of Revelation as the destination of the devil, his angels, and all whose names are not found in the Book of Life after the final judgment (see Revelation 20:10, 14–15). The lake of fire is the second death” (Revelation 21:8), total separation from God.
 - i) Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire – meaning that the temporary realm of the dead (Hades/Sheol) gives up its souls for final judgment, and then those souls, if condemned, go to this final hell (Revelation 20:13-14). Jesus equated it with “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41) and with “outer darkness” where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
 - ii) Fire and darkness don’t happen together. These are metaphorical descriptions. Fire consistently refers to a power that purifies or destroys.
- 19) Heaven and hell are never used in the same sentence in the bible; the opposite of heaven is not hell, but earth. Sin linked with death (physical, spiritual(relational)) – there is a sense that this is not how things ought to end – death is an enemy/invader
- 20) Jesus takes on sinful humanity, dying in our place and then resurrecting -opening up a new way to be human
- 21) <https://rethinkinghell.com/2018/01/23/gehenna-the-history-development-and-usage-of-a-common-image-for-hell/>

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Appendix 1: Annihilation or Eternal Conscious Torment

- a) One method of interpretation emphasizes the concept of “The new is in the old concealed; the old is in the new revealed.” (Augustine) Some theologians lean into this concept regarding passages regarding hell; when OT passages that are repeated in the NT, it is assumed that the NT is adding meaning. This concept is used in cases such as of (ex: Matthew 2:15, “out of Egypt I have called my son”). However, if a new meaning is not specified in the NT then we are not obligated to use that new meaning.
- b) Terms and concepts to consider
 - i) **Unquenchable fire** – *fire that will not end or be put out until it has fully consumed its fuel*
<https://rethinkinghell.com/2012/11/20/the-fire-is-not-quenched-annihilation-and-mark-948-part-2/>
 - (1) Luke 3:8-9, 17 ... thrown into the fire... burn with unquenchable fire ...”
 - (2) Unquenchable fire and worms that do not die does not mean that they will not end once their work is completed. The punishment and shame will be eternal. (cp. Judith 16:17 refer to weeping in pain forever, but Jesus’ words match Isa 33:10-14 and not Judith – or the targum The Chaldee Paraphrase 226) which mentions that their souls won’t die)
 - (3) Isa 33:10-14 – everlasting burnings – but is also called consuming fire, complete destruction. Could also reference God, who is the consuming fire
 - ii) **Gnashing of teeth** – *usually a sign of anger, not of anguish*
<https://rethinkinghell.com/2018/11/28/weeping-and-gnashing-of-teeth-do-not-indicate-eternal-torment/>
 - (1) Matt 13:41-42 “The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (NIV) It is not explicit whether the weeping and gnashing happens in the furnace for before being cast into it.
 - (2) Luk 13:24-28 “... weeping and gnashing when you see ... yourselves being thrown out.” The self-righteous Jews will be angry when they see others enter the Kingdom of God but they themselves are cast out.
 - (3) Ps 112:10 “The wicked will see it and be vexed, He will gnash his teeth and melt away. The desire of the wicked will perish.” – fits annihilation
 - (4) Matt 24:51 wicked servant assign him to place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Preterist prophecy of destruction of Jerusalem. (Re: Mk 13:14, Dan 12:11; Luke 21:20-21) Reference to being cut into pieces indicates being destroyed, so the weeping and gnashing must happen before.
 - (5)
 - iii) **Worm will not die** - (Isa 66:4; Mk 9:48) does not say will *never* die, there are Hebrew and Greek words to indicate *never*. <https://rethinkinghell.com/2012/07/17/their-worm-does-not-die-annihilation-and-mark-948/> <https://rethinkinghell.com/2020/01/13/rh-live-episode-17-what-the-bible-really-says-about-undying-worms/> Cp. Gen 42:20 “Bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified, and you will *not* die.”
 - iv) **Fire and brimstone (sulfur)** - (Revelation 14.10; 19.20; 20.10; 21.8). OT references Gen 18:24-27, Deut 29:22-23 refers to complete destruction, not torment
 - v) Eternal torment or destruction
 - (1) Rev 20:10 – only verse to explicitly mention eternal torment. Refers to destruction of death, Hades, the beast (corporate entity). Devil, beast, false prophet – metaphors representing???
<https://rethinkinghell.com/2018/08/18/introduction-to-evangelical-conditionalism-mark-948>.
 - (a) Beast Rev 13 10 horns, 7 heads, like a leopard, bear, lion, power given by the dragon
 - (b) Red Dragon Rev 12 7 heads, 10 horns. Dragon with his angels fighting Michael, also called the devil and Satan

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- (c) False prophet – 3 unclean spirits like frogs came out of mouth, aka the second beast with 10 horns and 10 crowns who comes out of the sea <https://digitalbible.ca/article-page/bible-study-symbols-the-false-prophet-a-deep-dive-into-a-biblical-symbol-and-its-significance-1700845103624x342774571618277950>
- (d) lake of fire and sulfur – represents destruction(death of death and Hades, death of systems represented by the beast and prophet). Torment of Satan and beast and prophet must be like Rev 14:9-11 where smoke of torment rises forever
- (e) NOTES: those who reigned with Christ (Rom 5:17; 1 Cor 4:8), marks on hands and forehead (Deut 6:4-8); first (spiritual) resurrection (see also <https://www.preteristcentral.com/Three%20Views%20on%20the%20Resurrection.html>)

(2) **Smoke of torment** rising forever (Rev 14:9-11; 20:10-15) Old Testament usage indicates hyperbolic description of total destruction (Isa 34:8-10)

(3) 2 Peter 2:6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

(4) Jude 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

(5) Isaiah 34:8-10 For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion. And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and her soil into sulfur; her land shall become burning pitch. Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever.

- (a) Eternal destruction – the one act of destruction happened and ended but the results last forever

(6) 2 Pet 2:6-7 Sodom and Gomorrah condemned to extinction. Peter did not mention fire and sulfur.

(7) Matt 13:24-30, 36-43. **Parable of the weeds** “at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his

vi) Eternal - Aionios

- (1) <https://abetterfuturenow.com/what-does-aionios-aion-eternal-mean/#eternal-life> The phrase “eternal life” is a synonym for the “Kingdom of God” and its primary intent concerns the quality of life found in relationship with Father God now, a reunion that restores our identity as children of God and our destiny as custodians of the earth.
- (2) Aionios followed by noun of action refers to the results of the action aionios zoe (eternal life) = kingdom of God life
- (3) Eternal punishment – the results of the punishment last forever (mat 25:41, 46). Punishment does not necessarily include pain.
- (4) Eternal fire (Jude 7) referred to destruction. The destruction was permanent when the “consuming fire” fully destroyed the cities. This usage is also supported by Intertestament writings. Some assert that Sodom and Gomorrah were burned by an eternal fire and are therefore “undergoing vengeance.”
- (5) 2 Thes 1:9 – eternal destruction – the results are eternal, not the one-time act of destruction. Eternal consequences do not demand eternal existence of the person.
- (6) Luke 16: Lazarus and the rich man. A parable in a string of parables, with a common role reversal. Not meant to set up doctrine but to make a point. The rich man is in hades, the intermediate state and yet has a body – that doesn’t work. Only Abraham is mentioned and not God and Jesus was speaking to people who were proud that they were descendants of Abraham.
- (7) Dan 12:2 everlasting live vs everlasting contempt. – everlasting contempt does not necessarily equate to everlasting conscience existence of the contemptible. We still have

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contempt for Adolph Hitler but that doesn't mean he is continually aware of our contempt for him. Being contemptible to God is that you are not made to always exist.

- vii) **Winepress of anger** (Isa 63:1-6; Jer 25:15-29; Lam 1:15; Joel 3:12; Rev 14:10, 19; 16:19; 19:15)
- c) Other cases against annihilationism <https://theologicaltouchpoints.com/is-hell-eternal/>
 - i) **Dead, not undying bodies** - Isa 66:24; Mark 9:48 refers to observing dead bodies, not undying bodies
 - ii) Suffering, not necessarily eternal –
 - (1) Matt 26:24 suffering of Judas – better if he had not been born - how much suffering would that entail? In this life or the next? Is what he suffered in this life sufficient.
 - (2) Will there be pain during the process of being burned? But even then it is not necessarily eternal
 - iii) Mt 8:29; Mk 5:7; Lk 8:28 demons “come to torment us before the time? Their concern seemed to be to “not to send them out of country,” or “not to be sent to the abyss,” but not the final judgment
- iv) Mat 18:21-35 parable of unmerciful servant – sent to tormentors until debt has been paid. Response to Peter’s question about forgiveness. The parable gives perspective of how God’s forgiveness is much greater than forgiveness that we can give and which debt we cannot repay.
- v) **immortality of angels** Luke 20:35-36, matt 22:30 – are the devil and his angels immortal and subject to eternal torment? – we will be like the angels, but the reference is most likely to the holy angels.
 - (1) Aggelos refers to demons (Mat 25:42; 2 Cor 12:7; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 12:7, 9)
 - (2) Aggelos refers to human messengers (Mk 1:2; Lk 7:24; Jam 2:25)
 - (3) Jude 6 – angels kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment – is a reference to a holding cell until judgment
 - (4) angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The unrighteous are burned like weeds, not as immortal souls.
- vi) Outer darkness
 - (1) Matt 22:13 parable about servant thrown into outer darkness. Cp 2 Thes 1:9 eternal destruction
 - (2) Rev 22:15 outside are the dogs, sorcerers ... no mention of torment
 - (3) Jude 13 ... for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever – could refer to darkness of death/annihilation
- d) Extrabiblical sources
 - i) Alfred Edersheim – based on pre-discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls, taught that “ the doctrine of the Eternity of Punishments seems to have been held by the Synagogue throughout the whole first century of our era.” But the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls refutes that claim that eternal torment was universally held
 - ii) Most Apocryphal books do not support eternal torment
 - iii) Jesus did not always explicitly correct all the false views that existed at the time. With the evidence we have, it seems that Jesus was able to teach conditional mortality (the idea that the wicked dead are unconscious (often termed “soul sleep”) until they are raised to be judged, and ultimately destroyed rather than eternally tortured) even if ECT was being held by many of his hearers.
- e) Immortality
 - i) Only God has athanaisa (1 Tim 6:16; 2 Tim 1:8-10) that which cannot decay or be corrupted
 - ii) Rom 2:7 those who seek ... he will give eternal life aphtharsia (incorruption, perpetuity, purity)

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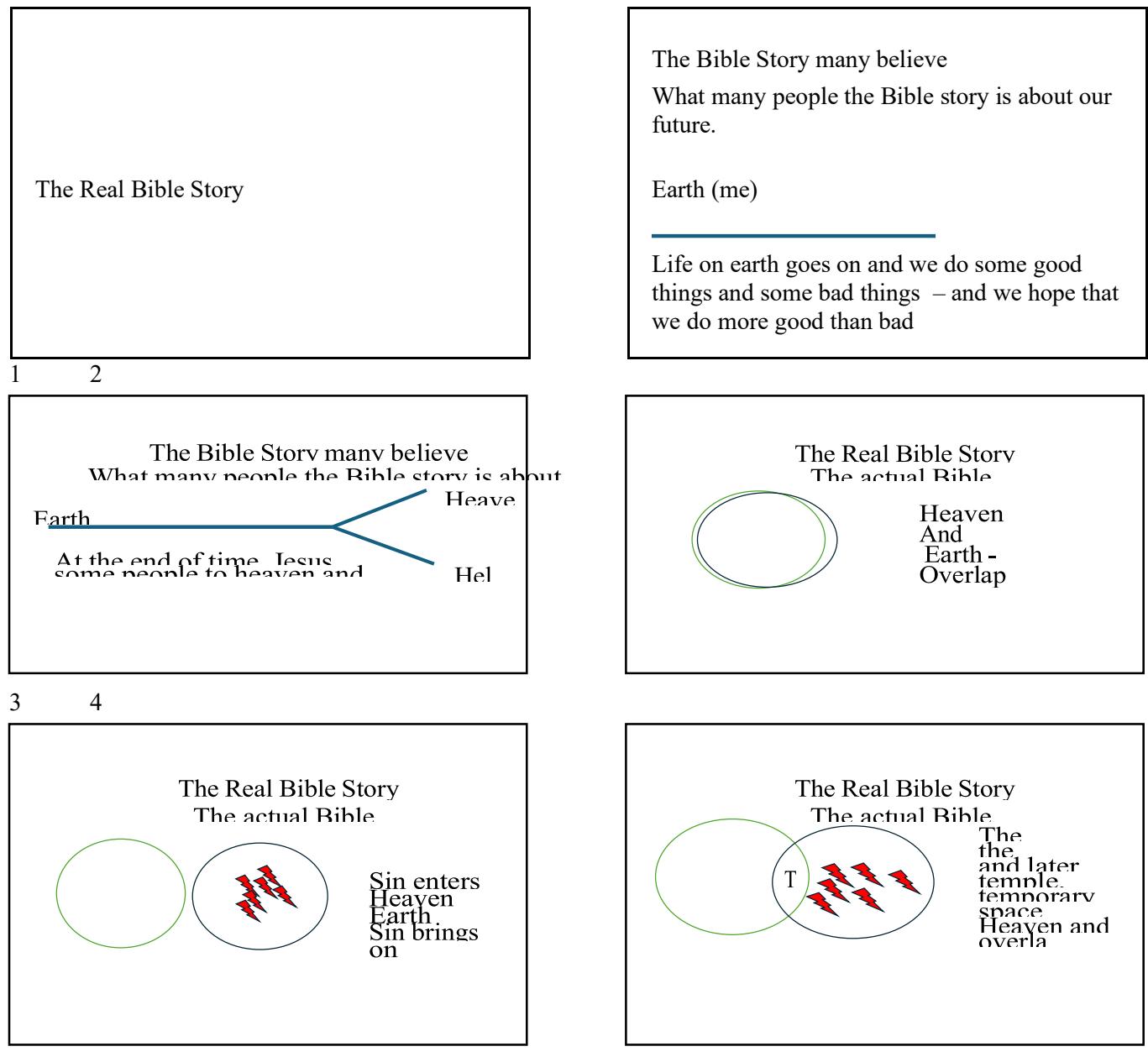
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- iii) Immortality not automatically given to all but only to those who receive the gospel (Rom 2:7-10)
- f) Tree of life
 - i) Humans removed from garden to remove them from possibility of eternal life (without God)
 - ii) Tree of life will be available again in the new Jerusalem
 - iii) Humans are not inherently mortal. We require access to the tree of life. The humans who are not present in the new heavens and earth will perish.
- g) Both Testament indicate Destruction
 - i) Old Testament
 - (1) Devoured by fire, vanish, destroyed, perish (Ps 21:9; 37:20; 92:7; 112:10) Psalms look to destinies unfulfilled in this earthly life and so looks beyond the present life for fulfillment.
 - (2) Destruction: Great flood, destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Korah and his followers swallowed up. Cherem of Canaan, Elijah called on fire from heaven (2 Kings 1)
 - (3) Sheol – the grave for the righteous and unrighteous
 - (4) Day of the LORD Mal 4:1-6 the day is coming, arrogant ... evildoers ... stubble ... ablaze ... destruction.
 - ii) New Testament
 - (1) Mat 10:28 destroy both body and soul in gehenna
 - (2) God will destroy those who destroy the church Mat 7:13; Rom 9:22; Phil 1:28; 3:19; 1 Thes 5:3; 2 Thes 1:9; 2 Pet 3:7)
 - (3) Man of lawlessness is called the son of destruction 2 Thes 2:3
 - (a) Unsaved will perish John 3:16; 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 2 Thes 2:10; 2 Pet 3:9
 - (b) Torment in a parable based on folklore Luk 16:19-31
 - (4) 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after **destroying** every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be **destroyed** is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.
 - (5) Ephesians 1:9-10 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to **unite all things** in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
 - (6) Phil 2:10-11 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. – if every knew bows, the unbelievers can't be included
 - (7) Ezekiel 28:11-19 – if it is about the devil then “you have come to a dreadful end and shall be **no more forever.**”

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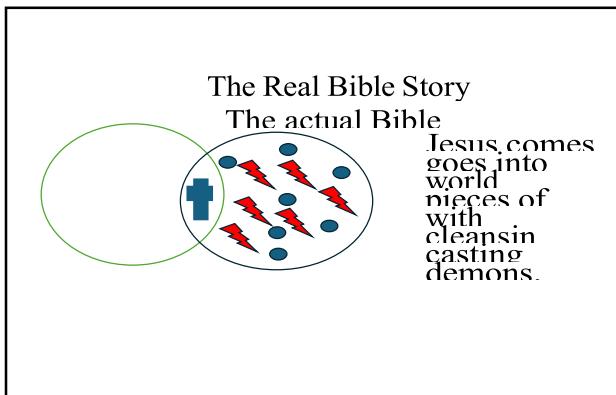
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Appendix 2: The Real Bible Story

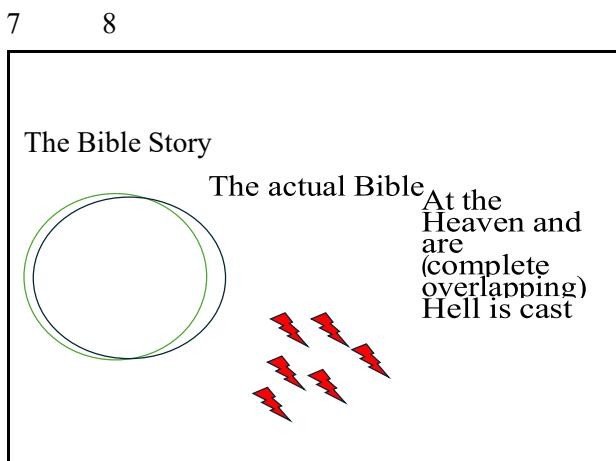
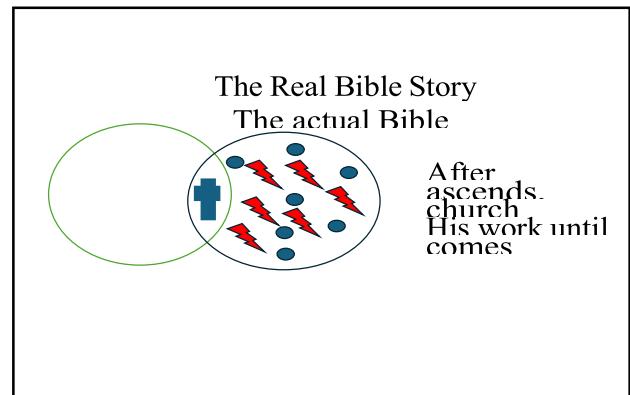


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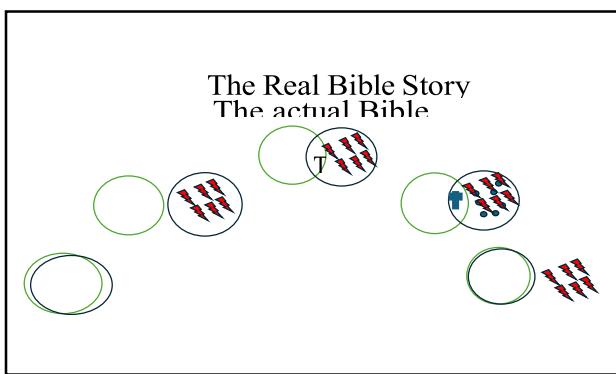
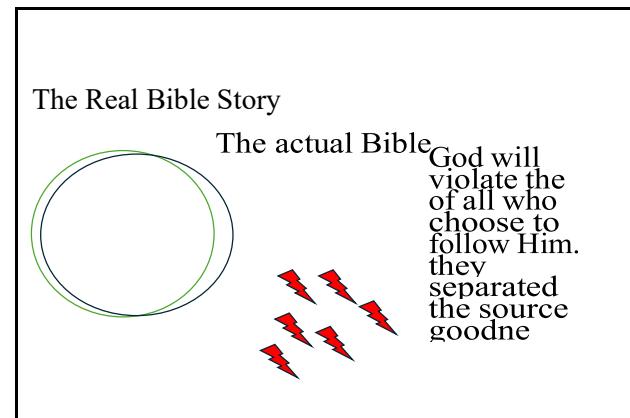
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Appendix 3: Covenant Affirmations

[The Evangelical Covenant Church of America](#) has its roots in historical Christianity as it emerged in the Protestant Reformation, in the biblical instruction of the Lutheran Church of Sweden, and in the great spiritual awakenings of the nineteenth century. Appreciating this classical Christian heritage and hungering for an ever more vital experience of new life in Christ, Covenanters affirm a number of evangelical emphases. Among these are:

1. **The centrality of the Scriptures**, the Old and New Testaments, as the authoritative Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct. We believe it is essential to the life of the Church that it be a company of people who want, above all else, that their lives be shaped by the powerful and living Word of God. The alternative is clear. Not to be shaped by the Word of God is to be shaped by the world.
2. **The necessity of the new birth for entrance into God's kingdom**, and the importance of continuing growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ for sound spiritual health. Jesus said, "Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). He also said, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32).
3. **The Church as a fellowship of believers**, characterized by mutual participation in and sharing of the new life in Christ. Membership is by confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is open to all believers. Considerations of class or race, education or pedigree, wealth or prestige do not enter. Uniformity in creedal details is not expected. What is required is that one be "born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). "The doors of the church are wide enough to admit all who believe and narrow enough to exclude those who do not," said our forebears. We affirm no less today.
4. **The ministry of the Holy Spirit**, who with the Father and the Son calls the church into being, empowers its witness, guides its mission, and supplies the gifts needed by the Church and its members to exalt Christ.
5. **The reality of freedom in Christ**, who delivers us from the power of sin and moves us by his grace into a whole new experience of obedience and life. This freedom creates an ecclesiastical climate which allows for differences of opinion in matters of interpretation, doctrine, and practice within the context of biblical guidelines and historical Christianity. Such freedom "is to be distinguished from the individualism that disregards the centrality of the Word of God and the mutual responsibilities and disciplines of the spiritual community" (Preamble to the Constitution).
6. **The importance of living out the full mission of the Church**, living out our faith and bringing Christ to people outside of our four walls, sharing the Gospel message of our redemption through Christ's work on the cross as well as sharing the love of Christ through ministries of compassion.