

Eternity Now Part Two

by Richard E. Bieber

Eternal life is the judgment of God coming down into our midst, separating us from our sin and our death and our blindness, and lifting us up into two things: to know God and to live in God's nature.

Scripture: Matthew 5:8, Matthew 13:41, Matthew 13:44, Matthew 13:47, John 16:8, John 17:1, 1 John 4:7, 1 John 4:9, Revelation 19:1

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Gods Judgment"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the concept of eternal life, emphasizing that God's judgment is always positive, righting wrongs and separating evil from good. He delves into the final judgment, illustrating how our choices in life determine our eternal destiny. Bieber highlights that Eternity is not just a future event but is present in every moment, permeating and judging our lives. He explains that eternal life is to truly know God and live in His nature of self-giving love, mercy, and forgiveness, as demonstrated through Jesus' sacrifice.

Transcript

ETERNAL LIFE-----NOW

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

Once more they cried, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever." And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" And from the throne came a voice crying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure"--- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Revelation 19:1-9a

What we're looking at in the above passage is a picture of final judgment. We tend to think of judgment as something negative. But God's judgment is never negative, it's always positive. It's God giving to each soul the destiny it has chosen for itself.

- Judgment is righting wrong.

- Judgment is separating evil from good.

- And final judgment is the eternal outworking of the choices we have made on our journey through time.

So, Lazarus the beggar is carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man begins to experience the flames of Hades.

In each case each one receives the very best that Eternity can give it on the basis of the choices that it made on its journey through time.

So, the rich man knew every time he passed that beggar at his gate without giving him a second thought that in doing this he was choosing the way of death ... he knew.... just as you and I know every time we harden our heart against our fellow man. And the beggar lying at this gate covered with sores with nobody to show him mercy but the dogs, also knew that God had not forgotten him. That somehow, one day, he would be

- by the judgment of God,

lifted out of his misery and taken into a place of peace and rest he knew.

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants." Once more they cried, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

And so the City of this world goes up in smoke. The system of this world is judged. The god of this world is judged. And the hearts that gave themselves over to the god of this world are judged. And the Bride of the Lamb has made herself ready. Her members, those people of God who, in fact, gave themselves utterly to the way of the Lamb are now assembled at the wedding feast.

But what we need to see is that the Eternity which will then receive us into the habitation of heaven or hell is not something waiting for us on the other side of death.

Eternity is not something that we will begin to experience when the Messiah comes and vindicates the name of God on this earth Eternity is here now. Eternity permeates and charges and watches over and judges every second of time. Judgment --- holy, righteous, awesome, perfect, un-mistaking judgment, burns in the room where you read this, breathes over our souls, shines through every second of this present life.

My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

Now if we listen to the voice of the Shepherd, know that he knows us, follow him ... when does he give us eternal life? After we die? If we listen, really listen to his voice, know that he knows us and follow him, we step into God's glorious, blazing, blessed, wonderful, shining Eternity--now!

The kingdom of God is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Matthew 13:44

What is the treasure? The treasure is Eternity. The man gets hold of this treasure, he finds it there, lifts it up, looks at it, and he sees the living God judging the earth.

It is important to notice that that parable is sandwiched in Matthew 13 between two parables of judgment.

The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Matthew 13:41-43

And then come the parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price. And then another parable of judgment.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; when it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad.

Matthew 13:47-48

Looking at this treasure the man who has found it sees that life is not absurd, haphazard, random chance as it always seemed to him to be, but that God is even now judging he's in charge. And seeing this, in tremendous joy he sells all that he has to get in there and live under God's judgment. For God's judgment is life it separates that sin from me, that evil from me, and lifts me up into his presence.

John the Baptist sits in prison bitterly disappointed because the Jesus he had announced as the Messiah isn't acting like the Messiah. He's not bringing the kind of kingdom John the Baptist is looking for. And so John sends two of his followers to Jesus to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for somebody else." Jesus responds, "Go back to John and tell him again the things you see and hear the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news preached to them." What are these things? They are Eternity breaking through the crust of time!

Each of these things is judgment coming down into the realm of time. Judgment on sickness,

on sin,

on death,

on injustice,

on the mercilessness of the great harlot and the poor have the good news preached to them. And the good news is that the harlot is judged ... that God's in control.

And when Jesus the Lamb hangs on that cross, this is eternity breaking through into time it's judgment. As Jesus dies on that cross, the Father's judgment comes down into this world judgment against the prince of this world Satan judgment against human sin.... judgment against the curse of death. No wonder there was an earthquake and the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom and the graves were opened!

When three days later the Son of God rose from the dead, stepped out into the morning air in an incorruptible body, this was Eternity again breaking into time bringing divine, awesome, holy, final judgment on the human race.

And when fifty days after the resurrection the Holy Spirit is poured out on the church on Pentecost, this is Eternity invading time ... the Holy Spirit brings Eternity right down into our midst. This is God pouring out on this earth a life which will be this earth's final Judgment.

And when he (the Spirit) has come he will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment. Of sin because they believe not on me. Of righteousness because I go to the Father and you will see me no more. Of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. John 16:8-11

My sheep listen to my voice and I know them and they follow me; and I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

Now the one who spoke those words is among us..... The same Spirit that visited the church on Pentecost is among us ... and he still speaks. If we listen to his voice, know that he knows us, and follow him ... he gives us eternal life. We have it and we know that we have it. We don't wait until we die to get it, we get it now.

So, what is eternal life? Eternal life is the judgment of God coming down into our midst and separating us from our sin and our death and our blindness lifting us up into two things:

Eternal life is to know God.... really to know God.

Eternal life is to live in God's nature.

I. Eternal life is to know God.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. John 17:1-3

To know God.... really know him not just knowing things about him.... his attributes, his characteristics, but to know him.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Matthew 5:8

If your eye is single, your whole body is full of light. When the light comes on inside us and our whole body is full of light we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus, we see the hideousness of our own sin, and we

are lifted up into life. With the eyes of our heart we see God ... love him ... listen to him--talk to him...worship him ... walk with him.

Abraham could haggle over whether or not Sodom should be saved ... down to ten righteous men ... because God was his friend. He knew God. He had eternal life by the power of the blood which was yet to be shed for him.

Stephen could walk into the jaws of death without fear or bitterness because he knew God ... he had eternal life.

Mary Magdalene ... when the light of God came on in her heart she saw God, she saw the hideousness of her sin and easily turned around into a totally new life ... she knew God, she had eternal life.

My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them and they follow me; and I give them eternal life.

When we gather at the table of our Lord. He gives us his body to eat, his blood to drink.

- He gives us eternal life.

- He comes down into our midst with judgment.

- He judges our sin....

- He judges our blindness...

and he causes us to know. And when we know, we have eternal life.

2. Eternal life is to live the nature of God.... not just talk about God's nature, but to live it.

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.

I John 4:7-8

Agape love ... self-giving love mercy love ... holy, pure love.

To live in God's love is to spend our lives giving. The purpose of life is no longer to see how much we can accumulate or how much we can achieve, but to give ... to give of ourselves in the situations in which we find ourselves. Simple down-to-earth giving, giving, giving.

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. I John 4:9

And to live through him means that we live in his nature. We begin to do the same things he's doing. In him we begin to give.

To live in God's love is to lay down our lives ... pour ourselves out, not in big dramatic acts but in the simple circumstances of every day ... to die to ourselves, to lay down our lives for each other.

In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. I John 4:10

He was the expiation for our sins by dying.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

I John 4:11

My sheep listen to my voice and I know them and they follow me; and I give to them eternal life and they shall never perish, and no one can snatch them out of my hand.

When we leave the Lord's table, we go forth into that world to live eternal life. To live the life of Eternity that not only waits for us at the end, but shines upon us and burns within us right now. To go out there and love each other, our neighbor, and even our enemy.

And as we do this, the divine, holy, clean, saving, healing, judgment of God goes with us wherever we go. And,

- the blind receive their sight,
- the lame walk,
- lepers are cleansed,
- the deaf hear,
- the dead are raised,
- the poor have the good news preached to them....
- that the harlot is already judged and that God is on the throne.

My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. And no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

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