

WEDNESDAY — Heaven=Light & Hell=Darkness

Big Point: *God is a light that no darkness can penetrate. We reflect this light when we follow Jesus; but the shadows of a sinful world are still present until God sentences us to either the light or the darkness.*

As children, and occasionally as adults, we are often afraid of the unknown that lingers in the darkness. Our hearts race. Our palms sweat with anxiety. Shadows dance on the walls, creating images that our minds tell us are monsters or demons. When we were younger, our parents may have plugged in a nightlight or given us a flashlight to deter our fears. Similarly, we live our lives in the darkness of sin, but glimpses of our Father God's light put our worries to rest. On our day of judgment, we will either be sentenced to an eternity of blackness or dwell in His brilliance forever.

*At the end of the popular book, "The Return of the King," author J.R.R. Tolkien writes about Sam coming to consciousness with Gandalf standing before him, robed in white, his face glistening in the sunlight. He asks, "Well, Master Samwise, how do you feel?" But Sam lay back, and stared with open mouth, and for a moment, between bewilderment and great joy, he could not answer. At last he gasped: "Gandalf! I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was dead myself. **Is everything sad going to come untrue? What's happened to the world?**"*

"A great shadow has departed," said Gandalf, and then he laughed, and the sound was like music, or like water in a parched land; and as he listened the thought came to Sam that he had not heard laughter, the pure sound of merriment, for days without count. It fell upon his ears like the echo of all the joys he had ever known. But he himself burst into tears. Then as a sweet rain will pass down a wind of spring and the sun will shine out the clearer, his tears ceased, and his laughter welled up, and laughing he sprang from bed... "How do I feel?" he cried." Well, I don't know how to say it. I feel, I feel" he waved his arms in the air—"I feel like spring after winter, and sun on the leaves; and like trumpets and harps and all the songs I have ever heard!"

How will we feel when the great shadow departs forever?

READ and THINK...Find Answers in the Bible

1. What do the following scriptures tell us about heaven, where God dwells?

John 1:5 (New Living Translation)

This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all.

Revelation 22:5 (New Living Translation)

And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.

Answer:

2. The following scriptures describe where people are going that are not entering the Kingdom that God has prepared for them. What outcome will these people face?

Matthew 8:12 (New Living Translation)

But many Israelites—those for whom the Kingdom was prepared—will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Jude 1:13 (New Living Translation)

They are like wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their shameful deeds. They are like wandering stars, doomed forever to blackest darkness.

Answer:

LIVE...What will you do now?

In John 1:5, we learn that Jesus tells us that God is a light that no darkness can put out. God’s light is so bright, He alone illuminates Heaven! Imagine and describe how you will praise and worship our God clothed in such glorious splendor.

It is difficult to envision an eternal life where there is no darkness because we now dwell in a world where sin is very real. However, Heaven is waiting for those who choose to follow Jesus. Reread the last paragraph from the excerpt of *The Return of the King* where Sam describes how he feels when everything sad comes untrue. Describe how you will feel when the great shadow of bad choices and suffering departs forever.

The scriptures above give a clear depiction of Hell as a very dark, miserable place. Think about a time when you were caught in the dark and couldn’t find a light. Did you experience any anxiety? Now, imagine spending an eternity in the “blackest darkness.” How does this alter the way you will share Heaven and Hell with non-believers?

John also records in John 8:12 that Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.” How are you reflecting that light in your life? Are there areas where you may be walking in darkness and need to repent and follow Jesus?

PRAY...God, What do you want me to know & do?

Take time to worship and praise God for shining His light where there is a great shadow. Pray for guidance to follow Him and reflect his light to the world. Repent of your sins to dwell in His splendor forever.