

Healing Hereafter: Quick-read Version

(For briefly examining nearly all the questions and conclusions found in Booklet 3.

Please explore the Full Version of this booklet for a more thorough discussion and extensive biblical and scholarly evidence validating the summaries below.)

Booklet 3: The Ultimate Publicity Stunt

Chapter 1

Our line of questioning turns to the fate of everyone who doesn't have access to God's solution of Jesus in a way they are able to comprehend during physical life. What happens to those who died before Jesus lived on earth, who were deceased at a young age or in the womb, who have always been mentally incapable of comprehending the gospel, or who otherwise have no way of learning about Jesus' message? As we search for answers, we are first reminded that God is impartial and never condemns any humans to Hell without giving them a fair chance to demonstrate their faith and hear the gospel. To do so would force God to violate his just nature by using a double standard for who ends up in Hell. It also makes no sense for God to go through all he did in providing the solution of Jesus if it were never applicable to the majority of humans who have lived to this point. Instead, we find it biblically and logically consistent that God wants to, can, and does fairly reach everyone with the gospel before judgment day, the day every human enters their eternal destination. God may accomplish this through earthly human evangelism, through earthly divine evangelism like dreams or angels, or through postmortem divine evangelism, such as the Bible's teaching that Jesus preaches to some who are dead. This is just, makes the solution of Jesus applicable to all, and judges everyone according to the exact same standard.

Chapter 2

The fate of those who die very young or in utero is our first illustration of God's all-encompassing evangelism. We realize that God not only violates his justice, makes Jesus obsolete, and holds a double standard if he sends people to Hell who haven't heard Jesus' message, he also does all three things if he sends people to Heaven who haven't heard or accepted Jesus' message. This contradicts the popular and emotionally-embraced notion that children will automatically go to Heaven when they die, so we explore everywhere in the Bible people turn to find arguments for it. We learn that these arguments ignore the literary context, make unwarranted assumptions, are invalidated by the biblical context, are logically inconsistent, prove themselves wrong, specifically require hearing the gospel and expressing voluntary faith in Jesus, embrace universalism, make it possible to for children to go from Heaven to Hell, or rationally justify killing anyone who hasn't yet been exposed to the solution of Jesus. We conclude that whatever measure of comfort the automatic salvation of children appears to offer is nullified when we consider its dire consequences. But we also alleviate the emotional difficulty of letting it go by recognizing that there are no tots in Hell, only ageless spirits who are as capable of making their own salvation decision as we are, and that therefore, all our children—alive or dead—are treated fairly by God.

Chapter 3

The issue of pediatric salvation leads us to ask why anyone without meaningful access to the gospel needs salvation in the first place, since a significant number of these individuals have no opportunity during physical life to use their free will to recognizably sin. The answer is simple for those who lived before Jesus and for those geographically isolated from the gospel: they are old enough, physically

mature enough, and capable enough to freely choose to know and experience evil on earth. To be sure that we know this is the case, the Bible explains the concept of general revelation. This is the education about God and moral truth that arises from the universe created around us and the conscience created within us that leave both groups above—as well as ourselves—without justification to sin innocently. And although general revelation could conceivably be directly appreciable to spirits within the bodies of children or the mentally handicapped, it cannot be physically appreciable to them. Instead, we discover that they—along with the rest of us—are still imperfect and in need of salvation because of every human's sinful nature. Because our bodies are exposed to the experience of evil from conception and because our spirits can only process information through the flagrantly flawed filter of a morally imperfect environment, every human is physically and spiritually imperfect and needs that imperfection removed. We demonstrate that our sinful nature is not inherited but immediately acquired, is not a part of our being but the mechanism by which it operates, and does not force us to sin but strongly predisposes us to sin. However, since the spirits of children and the mentally incapable get an adequate postmortem period of time to understand and respond to the gospel, it is all but inevitable that they will freely sin during this time too, as we do here. Therefore, both humanity's sinful nature and free will play significant roles in our universal need for salvation. Only Jesus, who is God and whose spirit is divine and therefore untainted by an imperfect world, does not need to be spiritually perfected to enter perfection.

Chapter 4

We've seen that giving folks an automatic pass to either Hell or Heaven is problematic for many reasons, but some claim that a postmortem chance to demonstrate faith and learn about the gospel is still unnecessary, as God could

reach everyone with his solution of Jesus before they die. While this could plausibly occur for some unreached individuals through divine earthly evangelism like dreams or angels, it's all but certain that millions of folks who didn't have physical access to the gospel could very honestly claim on their deathbed that God had not explained it to them through supernatural means. Some address these people—as well as children and the mentally handicapped—by expanding the scope of general revelation. Instead of only making us aware enough of God and morality to be guilty when we sin, they claim that what *all* humans can learn from creation and our conscience explains the gospel enough to make us guilty of rejecting Jesus' message as well. We evaluate this argument and dismiss it biblically and logically, explaining that only a comprehensible presentation of the gospel (special revelation) can provide enough information for a person to be able to freely and truly reject God's universal invitation to Heaven through his solution of Jesus. A final way God could reach everyone with his solution of Jesus before their physical death is to evangelize to their spirits directly, even if they inhabit baby bodies or brain-damaged bodies. Because there's no biblical evidence of such a spiritual transfer of specific information and because both physical presentations of the gospel and every human's physical existence would become completely unnecessary, we decide against universal premortem evangelism and accept the Bible's teaching that God gets the message out to the unreached on both sides of physical death.

Chapter 5

Since this teaching challenges the common belief that the saved go promptly to the current heaven and the unsaved go promptly to Hell upon dying, we comprehensively survey the Bible's commentary on humanity's immediate fate after physical death. We unveil that both the Old and New Testaments, as well as

Jesus himself, continually exclude both Hell and any place called heaven (either the current heaven or the coming, eternal Heaven called the New Earth) as archetypal destinations for humans until after judgment day. Some argue that individuals who were raised to life in the Bible proceeded on to the current heaven or that it became available to humans after Jesus' resurrection, but we discover that their examples either contradict each other or prove the opposite. Moreover, we learn that the Bible undeniably states that no humans—except Jesus—were in the current heaven even long after Jesus rose. We also find no biblical examples of humans currently in Hell, further solidifying an intermediate abode for all humans between death and judgment.

Chapter 6

However, there are three people who appeared to have at least visited the current heaven before their physical death, so we examine these cases to see if they add information to our understanding of life right after death. After acclimating ourselves to the ancient Jewish understanding of the current heaven, reading the Bible for what it actually says, and placing these examples in their biblical context, we can only support the presence of humans in the current heaven by embracing logical and scientific inconsistency and by making the gospel unnecessary for salvation.

Chapter 7

There are also five human parties in the Bible who seem to be headed for the current heaven immediately after dying, so we evaluate them as well. We find that these humans could only be in the current heaven right now if it were a frustrating, sorrowful place of segregation, if we disregard biblical context, if we implement concepts that have no biblical basis, if we make judgment day purposeless, if we

equate the desire to be in the current heaven with the immediate fulfillment of that desire, and if we ignore clear examples of the saved going somewhere besides the current heaven when they die. In many ways, the proposed objections to a distinct residence for humans between death and judgment are actually found to confirm that this is the Bible's rule of thumb for them.

Chapter 8

Because one of the primary driving forces why Hell and Heaven are currently uninhabited by humans is the unequivocal biblical teaching of a single, future judgment day for all humans, we ask why God waits until then to allow humans into their eternal destinations. The inseparability of final human judgment with the rather unique events of the apocalypse is one adequate explanation, but we also find that the Bible reveals that neither Hell nor Heaven are even available yet for human habitation. However, since the current heaven conceivably could be, we peruse various ways people have tried to reconcile humans having already been judged worthy of this heaven with a last day of judgment still to come. Multiple judgment days with multiple purposes for multiple different groups of people are the only possible options, and we confidently conclude that the amount of unwarranted speculation, biblical partiality, logical inconsistency, practical problems, and resulting widespread disagreement about these judgment days invalidates their existences, especially compared to the sublimely simple, single, universal, final, and biblical day of judgment.

Chapter 9

With an intermediate existence for all humans between death and judgment firmly established, we set off to discover where this occurs and what it's like. We discover the Bible's diffuse descriptions of Sheol (Hebrew)/Hades (Greek),

confirming that it is everyone's first stop in the afterlife. Upon reviewing the parallels between the Jews' and Greek's understanding of Hades, we learn of its three very different but necessary regions, all with biblical correlates. The first is called Tartarus in the Bible, and it is described as essentially a pre-Hell—a place of agony, although it is not completely devoid of God and his ideals. The Bible is clear that everyone in Tartarus will go to Hell/Gehenna. The second is called Paradise in the Bible, and it appears to be described as essentially a pre-Heaven—a place of peace, rest, and comfort that is not yet completely devoid of the experience or memory of evil. Only the righteous fit for Heaven/the New Earth are given as examples of humans in Paradise. Because these locales are unfamiliar to many, we affirm their biblical reality and necessity. Then we merge what the Bible directly reveals about them with its pervasive acknowledgement of a postmortem existence other than Hell and Heaven to demonstrate how well these locations explain otherwise confounding passages and answer otherwise impossible questions.

Chapter 10

The third region of Sheol/Hades is directly referred to at least twice and indirectly implied several times in the Bible. We validate this in each passage, and by placing them in the context of the biblical hereafter as a whole, we learn that this would be the spiritually neutral place that serves as a transient limbo only for those who had no meaningful access to Jesus' message during physical life. As soon as a person has received a fair chance to demonstrate faith and be taught the gospel by Jesus, their response would land them in either Tartarus or Paradise with everyone else. We explain why people there won't be more likely—and may even be less likely—to accept God's solution of Jesus, and we answer objections some have to a place like this. It is also differentiated from similar ways people account for the

unreached that are either biblically inconsistent or dismiss any need for Jesus. We then consider the three regions of Sheol/Hades together and offer two crucial reasons why the Bible spends the bulk of its words on Hell and Heaven and less on its other postmortem locales. We close our discussion about how God desires to, can, and will give everyone a just opportunity to exercise faith and know the gospel by emphasizing how biblically real, distinct, and necessary the regions of Sheol/Hades are and by summarizing how rationally and simply they can answer so many disturbing questions that a hereafter comprising only Hell and Heaven cannot.