

Healing Hereafter: Quick-read Version

(For briefly examining nearly all questions and conclusions in the entire series. Please explore the Full Version of Healing Hereafter for more thorough discussion and extensive biblical and scholarly evidence validating the summaries below.)

Part 1: Where Am I Taking You?

Chapters 1 and 2

Introductions and how to benefit most from reading *Healing Hereafter*

Part 2: I Love It When a Plan Comes Together!

Chapter 3 (Chapter 1 of Booklet 2)

The foundation of our framework of the biblical hereafter is who God is and why that determines everything else, so we begin with him. We explore how God reveals himself to humans as a trinity; a community of three entities that each optimally represent various aspects of who he is in ways that humans can understand. This explains why God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit are all necessary to make sense of God to humans and to allow God to exact his plan among us. We also learn how God's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence result in his nature—his set of ideals—and why this nature never changes.

Chapter 4 (Chapter 2 of Booklet 2)

It is this set of ideals that leads God to specifically create humans as the only physical creatures made in God's image. This launches a discussion on what most significantly sets humans apart from all other living things on earth, and we conclude that it is a free-willed consciousness. A biblical, biological, historical, and practical assessment of animal and human behavior supports a distinctly human creativity and ambition. As this has been scientifically demonstrated to be uniquely human—yet is also scientifically unexplainable—we propose that such original tenacity arises not from our brains, but from our spirits, an eternal component of humans not present in other earthly organisms. The biblical and logical conclusion is that an eternal, free-willed God created humans in his image by giving them an everlasting spirit that bestows truly free will.

Chapter 5 (Chapter 3 of Booklet 2)

This naturally causes us to ask *why* God would create humans to live forever and *why* he would give them free wills. We learn that the Bible's clear answer is to make it possible for God to accomplish his primary purpose for humans: to seek him and find eternal, perfect community with him. As would make sense, this purpose flows directly from the unchanging set of ideals that comprise God's nature and primarily determines how he sets up the hereafter that is described in the Bible. Our purpose of fully engaging in intimacy with God and his perfect nature forever cannot be achieved unless we can freely choose this community and exist forever in it, hence our tenaciously original spirits. Consequently, this essential free will must also permit choosing against such community—seeking intimacy with what is not God or his perfect nature. God cannot remove this choice from us without thwarting his purpose for us. The choice to embrace what is not God or his nature—the decision to willingly experience evil—is sin. We discover that not knowing evil versus knowing evil is precisely the choice that God

gave the first free-willed humans, and it is also the choice he gives us many times each day. Very often we freely choose to know not God and evil instead of God and good. Because God's nature is both just and merciful, we learn that the sentence for our sin is no more than its natural consequence: the knowledge or experience of evil, which cannot be fully understood unless a person dies. For this reason, and so that a human's pursuit of evil cannot perpetually harm others, sin must result in physical death. This leaves our free-willed imperfect spirits unable to engage in community with God in perfection, so a place without God must be created for them to spend eternity in: Hell. We discover that Hell is not simply meant for punishment; rather, its purpose is to allow our purpose to be achievable. Hell is primarily a human choice.

Chapter 6 (Chapter 4 of Booklet 2)

Our imperfection resulting from our pursuit of evil is the problem keeping us from our purpose of perfection with God in Heaven, so the only way to solve our problem is for our imperfection to be completely removed. We consider the various types of solutions that have been offered, and we find that all but one of them demonstrate the ineffective and distinctly human goal of either diluting imperfection with good deeds or ignoring it completely. Ordinary humans cannot live perfectly or undo past imperfections. We then realize that only Jesus offers a divinely logical way to fully erase our imperfection. Because God is the offended party, he is the only one who can forgive the offense, so God becomes a human himself as Jesus, God the Son. He is tempted in every way but lives a perfect, sinless life. Never once does he use his free will to do anything other than the perfect good that he desires for everyone to be immersed in. Therefore, he does not *have to* know and experience evil as a result of his choices or actions, which means he is also exempt from death. But because our willful sinful immersion in

evil is what makes us deservedly imperfect, God willfully but sinlessly immerses himself in evil undeservedly to remove that imperfection. And because we must endure physical death as our punishment, Jesus willingly dies on the cross as our substitute to enable us to be released from that punishment. With our sentence served by Jesus, we are able to be considered innocent of sin and imperfection by God, giving us an alternative to the byproduct of Hell when we die: Heaven. And to prove that he can one day free us from physical death and raise us in a perfect, imperishable body that can live forever in Heaven, as well as to exemplify the hope and victory that he offers, he returns from the grave in the resurrection. We find that it all makes sense. Our problem thwarts God's purpose, our punishment fits our problem, and his solution solves both our problem and our punishment. The biblical and logical way the solution is applied to fulfill his purpose for us is simply a human freely, genuinely, and persistently demonstrating sole reliance on God's way—his salvation through Jesus—to choose an eternity with God and his perfection in Heaven, the exact opposite of the decision that caused the problem in the first place. Having found Jesus to be the only solution to effectively remove the problem, we then ask why other solutions can't be just as effective as Jesus or why Jesus can't be merged with other solutions. Both questions are answered by unveiling that any configuration of multiple solutions makes no sense, is impossible, and is completely unnecessary, as long as the solution of Jesus exists and is made available to everyone.

Part 3: The Ultimate Publicity Stunt

Chapter 7 (Chapter 1 of Booklet 3)

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 8 (Chapter 2 of Booklet 3)

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 9 (Chapter 3 of Booklet 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 10 (Chapter 4 of Booklet 3)

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 11 (Chapter 5 of Booklet 3)

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 12 (Chapter 6 of Booklet 3)

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 13 (Chapter 7 of Booklet 3)

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 14 (Chapter 8 of Booklet 3)

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 15 (Chapter 9 of Booklet 3)

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 16 (Chapter 10 of Booklet 3)

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.

Part 4: Yes, I Gotta Have Faith, Ooooo, I Gotta Have Faith

Chapter 17 (Chapter 1 of Booklet 4)

We have now found fresh and functional ways the Bible explains how every human will be reached with Jesus' message, so that they can freely choose to accept it or not. However, there are many who believe that God—not humans—decides even before we are created who is saved and consequently who is not. Therefore, we examine exactly what God does decide is going to happen before it does and if such predestination affects our eternal destination. We start by demonstrating how it is not possible for God to either predestine or foreknow our salvation decisions while still allowing us to freely choose. As soon as truly free will is introduced, even God's foreknowledge is no longer reliable, as humans can alter their choices at any time, independent of any outside influence or foreknowledge. And if they can't, then they don't have free will. Therefore, God either must directly or indirectly force free-willed humans to be saved or unsaved, or he must leave that decision to them, setting aside any foreknowledge of which way they will choose. We conclude that God does the latter because it makes a lot more sense, but also because he would otherwise be forced to abandon his stated purpose in creating humans, openly lie to us several times, and violate his just nature. We ask how God can be sovereign while limiting his omniscience, but then we discover numerous biblical passages where he does exactly that—not to mention the extensive limits he places on himself as Jesus. We realize that the completely voluntary, self-imposed restriction of his foreknowledge of our

response to the gospel maintains—not diminishes—his sovereignty, because it allows him to keep his purpose intact, his integrity intact, and his very nature intact.

Chapter 18 (Chapter 2 of Booklet 4)

However, the Bible does confirm that God commonly interferes with our free will to make a great many circumstances and events inevitably certain, so that he can fulfill his prophecies and keep his promises. We review several examples of these predestinations that have nothing to do with human salvation, but then we take a closer look at the four that most poignantly do appear to influence people's eternal fates. By incorporating the literary context, we find that the first three comment on God's knowledge of either present or temporary future circumstances, but not eternal destinies. They also demonstrate again how God would not contradict his nature, does limit his omniscience, and persistently links a necessary component of human faith to the salvation process. However, the final passage does confirm that before he created humans, God predestined for a group of them to be saved, but we are not told if God picked specifically who would be in this remnant or if folks who already had become Christians simply considered themselves part of it retrospectively. To choose the most logical and biblical option, we ask which one is more consistent with who the Bible says God is and which one is more consistent with the context of this passage. Because God is honest and just, because Jesus tells us that Hell wasn't originally intended for humans, because he consistently includes human action in the salvation process, and because it is hypocritical for God to encourage, reward, command against, and punish such action if he himself predestined it, we decide the latter option is the more logical. In the passage itself we find three reasons God predestines that at least a remnant of people will be saved: for his glory, for his desire, and for his pleasure. The

passage's context teaches us how all three are compromised if God picks precisely who is saved, and it even reminds us that free-willed human faith is an indispensable parameter affecting a person's eternal fate.

Chapter 19 (Chapter 3 of Booklet 4)

Therefore, we survey numerous biblical examples of this faith that is bound to salvation, and we discover that its only necessary, fundamental essence is belief that God can and will do what he says, and that what he says is the best. We explain why it was not specifically faith in Jesus or the gospel that initiated God's salvation for so many in the Bible, but we also confirm that it must always result in that to complete salvation. Knowing—not foreknowing—everything of our minds and motives, God identifies when humans are freely and genuinely demonstrating the faith that their creator can and will do what he says and that what he says is the best, which requires no specific knowledge about God or Jesus to possess. He then knows that he only needs to say the message of Jesus to them in order for them to believe that he can and will save them through the gospel and that the solution of Jesus is the best. So he does, and we already know how God provides meaningful access to the gospel, whether before physical death or afterwards if necessary. We explain how this free-willed human choice justifies God to only *then* specifically (specially) predestine that these folks will hear the gospel and believe it. In other words, once we freely convince God of the faith he seeks, he essentially runs the salvation process to make certain that it will be completed. A further exploration of this faith throughout the Bible reveals that it is fair and equal-opportunity. Moreover, it makes remarkable sense, because it directly opposes the nature of sin, continues to be useful and necessary beyond the moment of conversion, and ultimately helps to accomplish not only salvation, but the goal of salvation: eternal perfect community with God. We finish our discussion on faith, both by showing

how it is a human work for which God at least partially credits us but also how we still can't take any credit at all for the salvation that arises from it. This allows us to explain how our faith remains indispensable in proving to God that we want his salvation without allowing us to earn it.

Part 5: The King of Spring

Chapter 20 (Chapter 1 of Booklet 5)

Having established what kind of faith God seeks, we then examine how it looks in everyday life. Belief in the gospel is only part of its application in the salvation process. It continues to be utilized by increasingly building an intimate relationship with God, and it culminates in living a life more and more like his. This makes sense because people who genuinely have faith that God can and will do what he says and that what he says is the best will not stop with merely accepting Jesus as savior; their faith will generate desire to know this God who knows what is best and is able and willing to actuate it. As this best continues to be confirmed to them, their faith will also lead them to emulate God's best more and more. And this intimacy with and admiration of God is precisely what fuels fulfillment of humanity's purpose: eternal community with him in Heaven. Therefore, God desires the faith that he does, not because he needs an arbitrary prerequisite for salvation, but because it must be present to genuinely take every step of the salvation process and prove that humans truly want their purpose to be fulfilled, that they truly want God's Heaven. We also remind ourselves how essential God's involvement is throughout this process too, from making the solution of Jesus an option, to seeking out those with faith, to teaching them the gospel. But his words in the Bible teach us about him and his ideals to deepen our

relationship with him as well; moreover, upon exercising our faith to believe Jesus' message, his Holy Spirit enters us to prompt and even predetermine godly deeds of emulation. God's salvation is not triggered without the impetus of human faith and is not accomplished without the insistent work of God because that faith is what convinces God to specially predestine people to be saved, guaranteeing that the rest of his involvement—and therefore their inevitable salvation—will occur as well.

Chapter 21 (Chapter 2 of Booklet 5)

We learn that this lack of saving faith explains why people change their mind about Christianity. If they believe the gospel but not many of God's other words, if they know a lot of information about God but don't desire to know him, or if they do good deeds to earn salvation rather than out of admiration for him, they've tried to enter the salvation process without faith and therefore without God's special predestination or guarantee of salvation via the Holy Spirit. They don't lose their salvation; they simply never had it, but they can if they start at the beginning with faith. This leads us to ask if those who do have genuine saving faith can ever lose their salvation, and a review of several biblical passages detailing God's guarantee does not allow this to be possible. However, we also discover how God's salvation process seldom allows our salvation status to be objectively proven to us during this life either, and we discuss several reasons why it is eternally better for us and for others this way.

Chapter 22 (Chapter 3 of Booklet 5)

We then focus more on what the good deeds are which our faith and the Holy Spirit work together to accomplish. We find that God does not simply consider them as evidence of a person's salvation and desire for Heaven; he also efficiently uses them to produce glimpses of what Heaven is like for the benefit of everyone

on earth now. The salvation process is not only meant to get a person to Heaven; it's also meant for her to reflect Heaven to others, so that they learn what it truly is like and know how fulfilling choosing it would be for them as well. We distinguish this reflection from the argument that Heaven—or Hell—are actually brought to or are a part of our current existence, and we find that it is biblically and logically unsupportable to diminish the distinct natures of these places by relegating them in any way to earthly experiences. In fact, is it a faith-led desire to reflect God's ideals combined with the acknowledgement of an eternal Hell and Heaven that motivate human evangelism of the gospel. Even though God has made provision for those who have no meaningful access to Jesus' message during physical life, we peruse several reasons why sharing this solution with others is absolutely necessary and how it offers immediate and eternal benefits for everyone involved. But even as we recall the truly staggering amount of good deeds and good news God has used and is using his people to offer the world, we admit and address the very real presence of hypocrisy as well. We can now explain why much (though certainly not all) of it is actually committed by those who are not Christians, but rather those who have attempted to enter the salvation process without saving faith. Since they want to be saved but don't want to believe that all of God's words are the best, they adopt the Christian label but don't exemplify Christ's deeds or words. But regardless of whether the culprit is not yet saved or saved but still not finished becoming like God, we discover why the argument against Christian hypocrites is truthfully a strong argument *for* Christianity, especially by those who use it the most. However, because many have legitimately suffered from such hypocrisy, we search for a more reliable and complete way for God to respond to the evil in our world, whether hypocrisy-related or not.

Chapter 23 (Chapter 4 of Booklet 5)

Before we biblically and logically explore how God can be good amidst so much suffering, we pause to acknowledge the emotional impact of it first, with the assurance that a healthy mindset goes a long way in achieving a healthy mood. We tackle the hardest part of the problem of suffering first: reminding ourselves that every human experience of evil is derived from our persistent decisions to know what is not God or his ideals. Although specific acts of sin are not necessarily directly related to specific experiences of evil, we all undergo suffering because we all keep telling God every time we sin that we are not satisfied with him and his goodness, preferring instead to pursue the opposite. Even seemingly random, unfair, or large-scale suffering like natural disasters are simply different manifestations of experiencing the evil of injustice. Every sinner asks to know evil, whatever form it might take, by desiring what is not God or good. We review how passionately and repeatedly in the Bible God pleads with us to stop sinning and suffering, and it is clear that he never intended either for us, which is why an answer to the problem of suffering is never complete by simply addressing how God responds to it without addressing who truly initiated it in the first place. However, even though humanity is solely to blame, continues to choose it, and has no right to demand relief from it, God does respond to our suffering in ways that make it quite difficult for us to doubt his goodness—even in the midst of it. First, God is always working to transform the consequences of suffering from burden to benefit, rather than merely removing them and leaving us without the benefit. Besides, we would waste no time in sinning and suffering again, so removing these consequences would accomplish nothing significant anyway. Second, God uses suffering to help us more fully appreciate his blessings that still remain or have been taken for granted. Third, God can provide opportunities for us to much more effectively help others who suffer if we have suffered too. Fourth, suffering may be the only way God can persuade us to abandon choosing a fate that would be far

worse. Finally, once suffering is present, there is some good that can only be accomplished through suffering, like the availability of salvation made possible through Jesus' death. We won't put a rest to suffering, so God makes the best of suffering. But we find that he does even more by becoming a human to voluntarily experience that evil with us, to truly understand and have empathy for our predicament. Then we find that he does even more by offering us an eternity completely free of every experience of evil in Heaven, giving everyone who says they don't want to know evil anymore the opportunity to prove it and enjoy it. We conclude that God is nothing less than very good amidst human suffering. He takes the evil we ask for and deserve and mercifully benefits us through it, empathizes with us in it, and indiscriminately offers eternal escape from it in Heaven.

Part 6: Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones, but Words Will Never Hurt Me

Chapter 24 (Chapter 1 of Booklet 6)

Our exploration of human suffering transitions us to a focus on Hell, especially on the length of time a human would be there to experience it. We start with a list of the five main arguments used to propose a Hell that is not eternal. First we investigate whether or not everyone goes to Heaven, as that plays a critical role in how long people are in Hell. By understanding the original audience and literary context of many biblical passages that comment on the inhabitants of Heaven, we find that it is made available to all, but will only be inhabited by some—those who persistently demonstrate a desire for God's salvation through Jesus of eternal

community with him before the day arrives when every human's eternal fate is realized.

Chapter 25 (Chapter 2 of Booklet 6)

The second argument is what the words "eternal" and "forever" literally mean in the New and Old Testaments. Derivatives of the Greek root word *aion* are the terms primarily translated as the span of time referring to eternity in the New Testament, and we objectively peruse several Greek dictionaries to examine all our options for valid definitions. The discrepancies between these and the definitions offered by people who argue for a temporary Hell are recognized, and we realize how subjectively adding to, changing, or omitting expertly recognized meanings for *aion*—or any word—is dangerous and doesn't bestow any practical benefit anyway. From our unaltered dictionary options, we find that it is impossible for *aion* to be definitively temporary when describing Hell. To determine whether *aion*'s potential transience is plausible in these cases, we learn about another Greek word denoting a span of time that is definitively temporary and is used by Jesus specifically to highlight the difference between its finite nature and *aion*'s infinite nature. The biblical adoption of the definitions of *aion* consistent with endlessness is further confirmed by the intentional use of a uniquely repetitive representation of *aion* to describe Hell multiple times in the Bible. As this same particular representation of *aion* is used to describe both Heaven and God—but nothing else—we conclude that when *aion* is applied to Hell, the intended definition is clearly and consistently forever.

Chapter 26 (Chapter 3 of Booklet 6)

This leads us to explore whether that forever involves conscious individuals or people who inevitably cease to exist sometime after arriving there. We survey

biblical descriptions of those in Hell and find that many of their situations only apply to those who continue to exist. We question the practicality of an eternal Hell that eventually contains no inhabitants, and then we explore arguments offered in support of the cessation of existence in Hell. The notions that the opposite of eternal life equals annihilation, that the destruction of individuals equals annihilation, and that the biblical phrase "second death" equals annihilation are evaluated. By assessing the expertly recognized definitions of these terms, exploring the logical consequences of these claims, and putting them within their literary context, we discover that none of these notions remain persuasive, instead opposing several biblical passages definitively stating the contrary. But we also are assured that a conscious, eternal Hell is not the end of God's commentary on the topic, nor is it the end he desires for any individual.

Chapter 27 (Chapter 4 of Booklet 6)

We complete our linguistic study of forever by learning about *olam*, the primary Hebrew word translated to denote an indefinite span of time in the Old Testament. By reviewing its dictionary definitions we find that it is associated with a sense of uncertainty. This is reflected in the Old Testament's non-specific description of the afterlife, one we would expect without the historical context of Jesus to make sense of Hell or Heaven. This allows *olam* to be used to refer to different lengths of time, from only a few days to forever. However, it is never directly applied to the concept of Hell. Nonetheless, those who argue for a temporary Hell use this Old Testament term to claim that authors of both the Old and New Testaments never intended Hell to be forever. We verify that this is biblically and logically inconsistent, reaffirming *olam's* inapplicability to the longevity of Hell. Alternatively, we discover another Hebrew term translated as forever that always

means eternal and has no connotation of uncertainty, and we highlight the places it does refer to Hell in the Old Testament.

Chapter 28 (Chapter 5 of Booklet 6)

Then we address the third of the five main arguments for a temporary Hell: that people are only there until they overcome their arrogance or sin and repent, experiencing a conversion similar to what we are familiar with during physical life. We closely inspect the narrative told by Jesus on which this argument is based and unveil that the text has virtually nothing to say about either arrogance or conversion in Hell. In fact, it doesn't even take place in Hell, although it is a place adequately comparable to Hell for the purposes of the discussion. We see how the argument for a temporary Hell in this story relies heavily on assuming several additional qualities about the characters that the text itself speaks against. It also requires omitting the inescapability of Hell clearly taught by the story and the unanimous agreement of the characters on this teaching. We conclude that the words and actions of people experiencing the predicament of those headed for Hell provides a very strong argument against a temporary Hell.

Chapter 29 (Chapter 6 of Booklet 6)

The word "Hell" itself is the topic of interest in the fourth of the five arguments for it being temporary. The claim is that those who heard Jesus speak about Hell—or Gehenna as it is called in Greek—would have understood it as a trash heap outside Jerusalem that symbolized an unpleasant transient experience, but not a final place of punishment. Assuming this is what Jesus' audience did think of Gehenna, the only way people would end up there is in the form of a corpse, which is anything but a transient transition. More importantly, upon examining the single source of evidence suggesting that Gehenna is a trash heap, we discover that under the most

lenient circumstances, we can only conclude it was Jerusalem's landfill no earlier than 1200AD. And after consulting multiple experts on biblical literature, Jewish literature, Palestinian geography, and archeology, as well as a secular Jewish historian from the first century, we find no evidence that Gehenna was ever a trash heap at all, especially in Jesus' day. Instead, we learn that this argument relies on a subjectively inaccurate perception of the Bible's original audience, as it neither acknowledges nor accounts for Jesus' repeated warnings that Gehenna is an eternal place or the Old Testament's continual descriptions of Gehenna as a perpetual punishment of evil, both concepts that were clearly familiar to the ancient Jews. By objectively adopting literary, scientific, historical, and biblical information about Gehenna, we end up with a more responsible and rational understanding of the original biblical audience's understanding of Hell and therefore of Hell itself.

Part 7: Beyond the Point of No Return

Chapter 30 (Chapter 1 of Booklet 7)

Here we evaluate the fifth argument for a temporary Hell: that its purpose is correction rather than punishment. Taking a closer look at what warnings the Bible gives us about future retribution, we ask if it actually refers to Hell or not in the first place. We examine in particular the assertion that "the coming wrath" Jesus allegedly warns of is not an eternal Hell, but rather the imminent Roman retaliation to Jewish uprisings that culminated in the razing of Jerusalem in 70AD. We expose the fact that Jesus never used the phrase "the coming wrath," and we see that the only two times he refers to wrath at all are clearly consistent with the judgment of Hell. Then we explore when John the Baptist and Paul use "the coming wrath" to assess how likely it referred to a Roman rebuttal. The specific

people we are told of in John's audience turn out to be the least probable people—both biblically and practically—to incite Rome's wrath and therefore to need a warning from anyone to avoid it. We see that Jesus later echoes John's comments about “the coming wrath” almost verbatim, except that he replaces this phrase with Gehenna, invalidating attempts to equate it with Rome or any other temporary judgment. Then we discover that the audience of Paul's reference to “the coming wrath” is a church 1000 miles from Jerusalem who had no connection at all with Rome's Palestinian presence. Paul does not warn this church of Roman retribution, but he does warn them about a punishment of everlasting destruction. Because biblical warnings of coming wrath do apply to Hell, we turn to the word "punishment" itself to discover whether or not it can mean something transient in the Bible. Those who teach a temporary, corrective Hell examine the punishment of Hell described by Jesus in one of his parables and correctly demonstrate that the expertly recognized definitions for the Greek word translated as punishment—*kolasis*—include both punishing and correction. Because it remains a possibility, they conclude that the *kolasis* of Hell must be unpleasant but ultimately corrective, arguing that its meaning is derived from a plant being pruned for its own eventual benefit. We too acknowledge this possibility but withhold our conclusion until we've reviewed the parable's context for objective guidance. Upon realizing that Jesus describes *kolasis* as eternal, equates it with eternal fire, and applies it to people instead of plants, we admit that Hell is not meant to be temporary, that fire is never used to prune a plant, and that eternal fire is not a biblical, logical, or practical way to correct humans either.

Chapter 31 (Chapter 2 of Booklet 7)

But there are several examples in the Bible of very evil people being granted an opportunity for restoration by God. The account of the twin cities Sodom and

Gomorrah is among the most prominent and is used as evidence of a temporary Hell, as their evil inhabitants were destroyed but later promised a type of restoration. We see that those who equate this with transient correction in Hell are willing to trace the biblical commentary on these cities to God's offer of reconciliation, but they do not share what the Bible reveals after that. The fact that its final comments about Sodom and Gomorrah twice confirm that the general destruction of their inhabitants is eternal proves the inaccuracy and irresponsibility of only partially or subjectively exploring contextual information about a topic. To avoid this, we accept the full biblical context, learn of the historical context in which these two cities are set, and use this information to explain how God could provide restoration to people who are doomed to everlasting punishment. The solution it directly leads us to is none other than Jesus. God does not offer a universal, inevitable immigration into Heaven from Hell, but he does offer everyone—including those so evil that their cities are destroyed—the opportunity before they go to Hell to choose Heaven through the gospel. For the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah, and for others without meaningful access to the gospel during life, this would take place in Lugg.

Chapter 32 (Chapter 3 of Booklet 7)

To be as objective and comprehensive as possible, we also address the other biblical passages used by those who argue for a temporary Hell, so that we can determine the nature of the restoration found there. By focusing carefully on the literary context, we learn that there are two types: the Jews being rescued from captivity in other nations and a non-universal remnant of humans being rescued from wrath through the solution of Jesus. Neither of these is compatible with inevitable salvation for all after a period of correction in Hell, but the latter is consistent with God's offer of restoration to Sodom and Gomorrah through Jesus.

Chapter 33 (Chapter 4 of Booklet 7)

After recognizing that our response to Jesus *before* we enter Hell or Heaven defines our participation in God's restoration, the Bible's urgent warnings against delaying this response make sense in the context of the biblical, eternal Hell. We discuss why they don't make sense if Hell is temporary. Attempts to fit these warnings into the context of a transient, corrective Hell are found to be deceptive because each warning is only partially referenced and contradictory because each refers to a Hell from which no escape is implied. All of our findings disallow Hell's purpose to be restorative, completing our survey of the arguments for a temporary Hell. Given the implications of this realization, we spend some time emotionally digesting a forever Hell before taking a break from it.

Part 8: Having Your Cake and Eating It Too

Chapter 34 (Chapter 1 of Booklet 8)

We finally describe the Bible's most detailed and lengthy account of Heaven to you. Its vision of perfection is quite refreshing—particularly after focusing on Hell—but that discussion prompts us to ask how a Heaven containing free-willed humans could *stay* perfectly void of suffering, especially for eternity. We biblically and logically demonstrate how both angels and humans chose to sin in equally perfect circumstances and how the lack of someone tempting us in Heaven would not change our likelihood of sinning there. Instead, the Bible explains that although the first, full humans had free will, they were given a very specific way to use that free will to sin and know evil if they so chose. But then it carefully notes that in Heaven, humans will not be given that option to use their free will to sin.

We discuss how humans are changed on the day they enter the New Earth, so that the choice to sin and introduce suffering will be permanently removed, even though other free-willed decisions will remain unaffected.

Chapter 35 (Chapter 2 of Booklet 8)

Such an unmistakable Heaven prompts us to ask three very important questions, and these respectively allow our framework to wrap up the loose ends regarding Hell, then Heaven, then what they both mean for us now. To be maximally comprehensive and objective, we spend significant time unpacking them. First, we ask if God removes the choice of Hell's inhabitants to be saved as he does Heaven's inhabitants to sin, which vaults us into a discussion about why Hell has to be forever. Several potential answers people offer are evaluated. The first reason is simply that the Bible says Hell is forever, and either we don't need to know why because God does or we can trust his words because his willingness to die for us proves his trustworthiness. We clearly display how these claims are examples of logical inconsistency and circular reasoning, and we also remind ourselves why we have no reason to believe that anything God says or does is trustworthy if we are content to claim that questions about God's trustworthiness are impossibly mysterious. The second reason given is God simply decided that some decisions we make are eternal ones—setting us on an unalterable trajectory that lasts forever—one of which is a person's decision to reject God's goodness and enter Hell. We realize that this is simply another way of saying that Hell is forever because the Bible or God says so; it does not address why they say it. Thirdly, we consider if Hell might be forever because it would make Jesus' salvation less heroic or praiseworthy otherwise. In addition to balking at a forever Hell that generates any sort of praise, we explain why Jesus' accomplishment would only be diminished if Hell were less than forever *prior to* Jesus' death and resurrection.

Since these events have already occurred, we learn why a forever Hell is no longer connected to the magnitude of Jesus' sacrifice. Also, we find that this argument bases the punishment for our sin on how much glory and prestige Jesus gets rather than on the actual offense committed, making God's sentence of an eternal Hell an unjust one. The same problem is encountered in the next argument, which states that Hell is forever because the offense of sin was against an infinite being, meriting an infinite punishment. Again, the sentence is not justly based on the crime, but on the status of the person offended, and we illustrate the injustice forced upon God by this claim. Fifth, some suggest that Hell is forever because people know too much once they're there to leave any room for genuine faith that would prompt God's salvation. But we recall that it is not how much evidence or reasoning we have for faith that validates it; rather, it's genuine because its object is a God who can and will do what he says and that what he says is the best. In fact, we discover why faith without supportive knowledge is literally quite dangerous and reflect on the Bible's constant encouragement to use reasoning and experience to bolster our faith. Faith is still possible in Hell, but it would only lead a person there to believe God's words that Hell is forever. Moreover, simply knowing that God can and did do what he said he would regarding Hell does not necessarily force people to believe that he can and will do everything else he says or that these other things—like pursuing eternal community with him—are the best. Since faith therefore remains possible in Hell, an alleged inability to exercise it does not keep anyone there forever. Likewise, the answer to the original question of whether or not God removes the ability of those in Hell to choose salvation is found to be no, because it's not necessary. We remember that our ability to sin in Heaven is removed to keep us from making Heaven imperfect, not to keep us from abandoning faith and losing our salvation; likewise, this restriction is unrelated to the notion of God removing people's free will to embrace faith and salvation in

Hell. He doesn't have to keep Hell either perfect or imperfect, so he doesn't alter its inhabitants' free will toward either end.

Chapter 36 (Chapter 3 of Booklet 8)

So if these explanations aren't adequate, then why does Hell have to be forever? The Bible gives us two answers intimately related to each other. After surveying its examples of those who are clearly going there, we find that absolutely none of them demonstrate any desire to escape their predicament in favor of the only alternative, God's Heaven. In fact, many of them make their desire to remain separated from God even more clear, confirming once again that Hell is not functional as a temporary correctional facility. Although it is possible for people there to have faith, the Bible unanimously teaches that none do. We examine the expertly-recognized definitions of "fixed"—the Greek word *sterizo*—as it is used to describe postmortem separation from God. We learn that it applies to people's minds, not just to persistent geographical separation, further demonstrating people's constant lack of faith in Hell. The second reason that Hell is forever is the absence of God there. Hell exists because free will necessitates a place for those who choose an existence apart from perfect, eternal community with God. God cannot force himself into Hell without negating this free will and therefore the fulfillment of his purpose for humans. But because he cannot be there, he also cannot specially predestine any who have saving faith (which apparently won't be anyone in Hell anyway), instigate any written or practical presentation of Jesus' message, or be present as the Holy Spirit to guarantee salvation or empower the persistent good deeds inseparable from salvation. There is no God in Hell for people to initiate a relationship or build community with. We biblically and logically unveil that Hell has to be forever because every single component of the salvation process remains absent there: human saving faith, God's special

predestination, presentation of the solution of Jesus, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a growing relationship with God, and increasing emulation of his ideals that express a genuine desire for Heaven. And after remembering that God doesn't desire anyone to choose Hell and explaining why it can only be less than forever if Heaven is impossible, forced, or inaccessible, we conclude that the biblical Hell is ultimately understandable.

Chapter 37 (Chapter 4 of Booklet 8)

So we move on to the second question raised by an unmistakable Heaven: even if we can't choose to newly sin and suffer there, how can Heaven's promised lack of mourning, crying, and pain be realized if we can remember our earthly sin and suffering? The possibility that it can't is raised, and we begin to examine the strength of this claim. We learn that the Bible directly states that we won't remember our pre-Heaven life, that our skills and relationships in a Heaven of memories would be less fulfilling, and that such a Heaven would encourage segregation, inequality, and exclusion. The popularity of such a concept is found not to arise from biblical evidence for it, but rather primarily from the emotionally-appealing, cliquish, and even fabricated teachings that prevalently spread unrecognized and unchecked in many Christian circles. Some who believe in a Heaven of memories claim that the saved outside of these circles would not experience the segregation, inequality, and exclusion remembered from earthly experience because God would somehow fix this and offer perfection independently of these memories. But if remembering life before the New Earth is not necessary for God to make perfection optimal for some, it is not necessary for anyone. We address the question of how God and angels can perfectly observe and remember human suffering in the current heaven and on the New Earth if we cannot. The Bible answers by showing how their superhuman knowledge of what

God accomplishes through suffering and how their superior natures and abilities allow them to recount human suffering in Heaven without tainting its perfection for them. We discuss why this can never be the case for humans in a Heaven of memories.

Chapter 38 (Chapter 5 of Booklet 8)

We then embark on a closer examination of our recollections of earthly life to determine precisely what role they play in suffering, both here and in Heaven. We realize that the memory of an evil occurrence is an equal or greater cause of suffering than the event itself, that it generates its own unique experiences of evil independent of the event, and that there is no reason to believe that the primary and secondary suffering associated with this memory ever completely subsides. The conclusion that memory is inseparable from suffering is illustrated in no better way than an inhabitant of Heaven's observation or recollection of a loved one in Hell. This example catches proponents of a Heaven of memories at a loss, as they can only address such a sordid scenario by proposing that watching friends and relatives in Hell will make Heaven so good that we won't be able to suffer with them or make us love Jesus so much that we will no longer love them enough to suffer with them—even to the point that we no longer consider them to be human. We instead follow the Bible's lead in concluding that humans in Heaven simply won't remember those in Hell and can't observe them either. But memory does not only make Heaven imperfect through suffering, but through misinformation as well. We admit how inaccurate a very large number of our recollections are and how harmful that can be, learning how the Bible therefore teaches that our imperfect reasoning will not just be altered, but completely disappear. Nonetheless, some suggest that we will be able choose in Heaven which memories to keep or get rid of. However, this process itself would cause recollection of

suffering there, and we would never be able think of every evil or false memory to get rid of anyway, maintaining our ability to suffer later there because of them.

Others argue that God will remove all of these recollections for us, but the absence of so many memories intimately interwoven with the good ones that remain would render our modified recollection of earthly life utterly useless nonsense. And if God also filled those gaps with new perfected "memories," we learn how they still wouldn't make any sense and ask why God doesn't just replace *all* of our earthly memory with whatever new and perfect information he pleases. Enabling us to relearn what we perfectly can about our former lives without remembering them avoids all of these problems and makes a lot more sense.

Chapter 39 (Chapter 6 of Booklet 8)

So why then does a belief in a Heaven of memories persist? The first reason we unearth is that it is such a chronic and common belief among Christians who more or less keep to themselves that no one ever challenges it. And if someone does, the resultant disturbing questions and doubt will eventually give way to this belief, as it is too ingrained to change. But as many of these folks know, the doubt will return, and in the meantime, they are unable to adequately answer these questions for someone who hasn't been around Christianity long enough to be willing to wait them out. The second reason people hold to a Heaven of memories is the concept of continuity, the idea that our lives here and on the New Earth are one big continuum, at least as much as they can be. And indeed, there are several places the Bible confirms continuity of this life with postmortem existence. However, as we survey these passages, we learn how every one of them involves individuals in Sheol/Hades, a very prevalent place in the Bible that continuity supporters rarely address or explain. Because we're never told that any region of Sheol/Hades—even Paradise—needs to be perfect, there is no problem with the Bible's accounts

of people remembering their earthly lives there, at least minimally suffering there, or observing folks on earth or in other parts of Sheol/Hades from there. What we do not find in the Bible, besides the two exceptions below, are examples of human continuity in the places we are told are perfect: the current heaven and the New Earth. Jesus and judgment day are the only two times human memories of earthly life appear to be present in the current heaven, and we find no definitive memories like this in the Bible's descriptions of the New Earth. We realize that this is actually optimal; by giving the saved both a postmortem place to continuously reunite with loved ones (Paradise) and then a discontinuous eternal destination where none of the imperfections of memory or continuity apply (Heaven), God gives us the best of both worlds.

Chapter 40 (Chapter 7 of Booklet 8)

Nonetheless, supporters of a continuous Heaven offer other passages as evidence, so we review them. Some reveal that we will retain our names on the New Earth, and the Bible retrospectively identifies a few people by name who will be there. But it does not follow that they will be remembered or recognized there by other humans simply because they are present and bear the same moniker. And the rest of the passages don't concern the New Earth at all, but rather individuals prior to entering Heaven. Moreover, we discover that none of these verses mention human recognition or remembrance in Heaven in any way, nor do they identify individuals there as our earthly family or friends. We conclude that there is no biblical evidence of a family or friend reunion on the New Earth. However, we do acknowledge that there will be rewards there for deeds done here, so even if we don't remember our relationships, will we continuously remember our accomplishments? We find no biblical or logical reason a reward necessitates memory of why it was given. And we also see that the Bible only specifies two

categories of rewards in Heaven: community with God and various positions of authority. The first is simply a recognition of the persistent earthly deeds done through faith and with the help of the Holy Spirit as part of the salvation process, and there is no biblical evidence that any record or human memory of these deeds endures beyond judgment day. The second is simply a necessity on the New Earth to maintain a functional society; we will need to occupy such positions whether or not we remember why we have the ones we do, so there is no role for this memory there. In fact, biblical rewards turn out to only be a problem in a continuous Heaven, where humans can recall connotations of inequality and oppression tied to earthly societal hierarchies that would pollute a perfect understanding of our Heavenly positions.

Chapter 41 (Chapter 8 of Booklet 8)

In spite of this, many hold on to a continuous Heaven because they believe that the earth itself is continuous, and therefore that this planet will be transformed into the New Earth. There are a few confusing aspects in biblically evaluating this belief, so we start discussing this earth's fate by addressing them. First we peruse the several Old Testament passages that seem to refer to a future time of bliss in a place that partially resembles this earth but partially resembles the New Earth. We learn that it is common in prophetic literature for the same prediction to be fulfilled in multiple ways or at multiple future times, and biblical examples are offered. We also discover two periods of bliss that are predicted for the distant future: a peaceful epoch on this earth prior to a final battle before judgment day and a perfect eternity on the New Earth. Because the passages above often refer to both, understandably lumping them together given their remoteness, similarity, and chronological proximity, it is difficult to ascertain which verses definitively refer to which place. However, what is certain is that the details given cannot

consistently refer to both, so it is invalid to use any of these passages to claim that this earth and the New Earth are the same or continuous, and we find how contradictory it is when people attempt to do so. Instead, we identify the verses that can only be referring to the New Earth and exclusively use them to more accurately and definitively arrive at our conclusions. The ark of the covenant is then used as a specific example verifying how continuity is almost completely nonexistent from this earth to the New Earth. Then we clarify what is contextually meant by the words "earth," "restore," "redeem," and "renew" throughout the Bible to see if they support the continuity of earth. We discover that the latter three words only ever refer to our entire planet in the context of judgment day, where we are reminded how many discontinuous things are ending. That this earth is one of them is repeatedly confirmed in a biblical blitz of what we are directly told about the earth's longevity, culminating in the unequivocal doom that it "falls-never to rise again."

Chapter 42 (Chapter 9 of Booklet 8)

Given this finality we ask why the belief in a continuous earth remains popular and identify three firmly-embraced ideas that cause folks to hold on to it. First, people consider this earth to eventually be the New Earth because their entire realm of experience so far is here. This life is what they're comfortably familiar with, so this is what they want Heaven to be like. Understandable, but when we ponder how it would only be comfortably familiar to humans who lived a long and happy enough life here, how any Heaven would be just as comfortably familiar after a few years there, how many things once comfortable to us acceptably aren't anymore, and how limiting a forced best-of-earth Heaven would be to God, we concede that the only one who truly knows what is comforting to humans should be free to make a Heaven far greater than our best suggestion. God makes a

Heaven that remains optimal for everyone there, regardless of their experience on earth or their familiarity with Christian community here.

Chapter 43 (Chapter 10 of Booklet 8)

Second, many cling to a continuous earth because they believe that, along with humans, this planet and the entire universe were also saved by Jesus and must therefore not be destroyed, but be perfected with us. The idea that human sin somehow infects the whole universe with imperfection arises from an Old Testament curse put on creation and a New Testament frustration that creation is subject to, but upon closer inspection we find that they are two quite different entities. We know that the consequence of human sin is the knowledge of evil and suffering, and we discover immediately after the first human sin that God quite logically curses the ground solely—and very specifically—as a way for humans to experience suffering, not because God's innocent and good creation was illogically infected by human sin. Throughout the Bible we find that whenever God curses creation, it is directly related to humans enduring the consequence of their sin, not to some fallen state of creation. Moreover, we learn that the restoration of creation found in passages describing the New Earth all directly relate to humans no longer experiencing suffering from creation as the curse is lifted, not to aspects of creation being perfected that never cause human suffering. This is because they don't need to be perfected since they were never inexplicably infected by human sin to begin with, which is precisely why Jesus is a *human* solution who only effectively removes *human* guilt and death. No just or logical atonement in the sacrifice of Jesus is found to eliminate alleged zoological, botanical, or celestial imperfection. Creation's frustration is different from the curse; it's the detrimental impact *humans* have on creation because of their sin, not the impact that God's curse has on it to punish them. Therefore, in Heaven, creation's frustration is removed by humans

becoming incapable of sin, not by God lifting the curse for humans via Jesus to free them from the knowledge of evil and suffering that creation was sometimes used to effect. Creation is not guilty or deserving of punishment. Rather, it is used for human punishment, so it does not need to be continuously perfected and restored to the New Earth, and we illustrate yet again how the Bible logically confirms this.

Chapter 44 (Chapter 11 of Booklet 8)

The third idea that ties people to a continuous earth is the belief that Satan is victorious over God if this earth is eventually so ruined that God decides to start over with a brand New Earth. However, we've already learned that eliminating this planet so that it never rises again is not Satan's plan, but God's, so Satan can only win if the earth is continuous. Not to mention that Satan is not defeating anything when this planet meets its end; in fact, he's just been defeated by God and is about to be sentenced to Hell forever. We also observe that even if this earth could be rebuilt from the biblical destruction it undergoes, it would be from such an unrecognizable state—literally in pieces—that there would be nothing victorious to God or meaningfully continuous to humans about it. And which time period would such an earth be continuously restored from, and how would that be comfortably familiar to anyone who didn't live during that era? Finally, we acknowledge that no earthly time period would be continuously familiar for non-human beings, like angels or any other potential saved, sentient beings in our universe, who would be forced to reside on a New Earth that is our world, not theirs. Evaluation of earth's continuity leads us to conclude that the three ideas perpetuating belief in it limit how wonderful Heaven can be, force an unjust punishment on a good and innocent creation, cause the solution of Jesus to no

longer make sense, rob God of the victory of keeping his word, and force Heaven to be uncomfortably unfamiliar to most of its inhabitants.

Chapter 45 (Chapter 12 of Booklet 8)

We adopt the biblical, logical discontinuous New Earth, but then we explore whether or not our bodies or interactions are still continuous there. The subjective, biblically-absent notion that we will all be blemishless and beautiful in Heaven is challenged by the reality of conflicting remembered standards of beauty and the impossibility of meeting them all simultaneously, especially while still remaining recognizably continuous. We do biblically confirm that the resurrected bodies of both the saved and unsaved will be imperishable and likely have at least some general anatomic continuity. Then we observe Jesus' resurrected body to discover how much it can teach us about our imperishable bodies. We acknowledge that Jesus is God with divine bodily capabilities, and we aren't; moreover, his resurrected body needed to possess its precise form and abilities to convince people of his resurrection and the worthiness of sharing it with the world, and ours won't. And when we consider that the resurrected form he took on this imperfect earth is vastly different from the multiple forms he assumes later on in the perfect current heaven, we have every reason to believe that his resurrected body on the perfect New Earth that ours will be like is anything but predictable. We even discover that the body he exited the tomb with was quite unrecognizable, even to those who knew him the best. Because there is almost nothing we can reliably infer about the appearance or continuity of our bodies on the New Earth from Jesus' body, we gather our information from everywhere the Bible talks about other folks' resurrected bodies instead. The list of details generated only serves to further reestablish the exceedingly limited continuity our bodies will display, and especially in the cases of marriage and family relationships, we find the

discontinuity striking, yet also sensible. We end our expedition into continuity by determining that it is almost never a biblically or logically responsible method for extrapolating information about the New Earth, and we summarize the many reasons why in two parallel stories of a person's trip to a continuous Heaven of memories and to the discontinuous Heaven of the Bible.

Chapter 46 (Chapter 13 of Booklet 8)

The first story poignantly points out how a comfortably familiar Heaven of reunions inevitably results in a confusing, disappointing, segregated, and unequal experience of suffering, resembling Hell far more than Heaven. We conclude that humans would never ultimately want this Heaven, that God would never create this Heaven for them, and that therefore, he doesn't.

Chapter 47 (Chapter 14 of Booklet 8)

The second story pulls together concepts from this book's entire framework to discover the Heaven that humans would truly consider perfection, that God would choose to create, and that therefore, he biblically and logically does. It is insistently rational and most refreshing, and we have every reason to conclude that the biblical Heaven is perfectly unmistakable.

Chapter 48 (Chapter 15 of Booklet 8)

At long last, we arrive at the third and final question prompted by the concept of an unmistakable Heaven, one that takes us from anticipation to application. If God can keep the New Earth perfect by allowing humans their free will, except the ability to sin, then why didn't he simply create us that way in the first place on this earth? The answer is nothing other than God's purpose for creating us: to reach out for him and find eternal, perfect community with him. He had to give us free

will so that we could truly engage in a meaningful relationship with him, genuine individuals choosing to know him and his goodness, not slaves coerced into his bidding. This free will had to include the option to know what is not God, to sin and know evil. God could not possibly know if we freely desired to be in perfect community with him unless we had a period of time to freely choose not to.

Humans have to have the free will now to ultimately choose God and his goodness or sin and evil before God can know which of them desire to have their ability to sin removed in Heaven. To use our free will to make this ultimate choice is the primary reason for our existence from the time that our physical life begins to the time that our eternal fate is decided. Indeed, there would be no point to this period of time if we're all eventually saved or if God has already chosen who will be.

God has to make us mistakable before we can demonstrate who of us desire to be made unmistakable in Heaven. Our framework is complete; we are only left with the decision of where it will take us.

Part 9: Where Are You Taking You?

Chapters 49 and 50 (Chapters 1 and 2 of Booklet 9)

Conclusions and how to benefit most from applying *Healing Hereafter*