

INTRODUCING:
**Faith
And
Eternity**

PART ONE: Faith & Eternity

There is more to you than the vessel of your body...

If you were to need heart surgery, would the surgeon find your 'soul' during the procedure? If you were to need brain surgery, would the surgeon see your 'mind' during the procedure? And where would you find your 'spirit' if you were to study the anatomy of the human body?



Our body is only a vessel, a vehicle for connecting who we really are - soul and spirit, to the material world we live in. That is, your body is the 'material' that you - your soul and spirit, uses to interact with the physical world around you. Our body uses 5 physical senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell, to interact with the physical world. But what about the spiritual realm beyond the limitations of our body and the physical world? Our physical senses belong to this physical world, so how does my spirit work and what spiritual 'senses' do I have? Unfortunately, many people think about life only through these 5 senses. Yet, we know there is much more to life than just the physical. It doesn't take much faith to believe that...

But who made your body, soul and spirit? What happens to your soul and spirit when your body dies? As our body ages and wears out, does our soul and spirit wear out too? And if we're made by a 'Creator', why? What's our purpose and do we have a responsibility for the life given to us?

Hopefully you're reading this because you want to get clear about these things, rather than avoid such important questions. After all, if our soul and spirit have life beyond the body, and if we continue to exist after the 'tent' of our body dies, it's best that we prepare for that life to come. Maybe whoever created us has some 'Terms and Conditions' that we need to be aware of before we get to 'life after death'.



Here's a brief introduction to what followers of Jesus Christ believe and put their faith in. May you find help, peace and hope as you read...

Jesus: Son of God, King of Heaven, or Poached Egg?

Jesus is a real man in history, who lived around 2000 years ago. Historians record his existence, and a number of religions revere him. He taught on right character, values, and morals but he also talked about life after death, heaven and hell, and the promise of the Spirit of God for those would believe. He lived a supernatural life healing many, even raising the dead. And when he was killed through crucifixion, the Bible records that God raised him from the dead 3 days later, and that he went to heaven.

Many people respect Jesus as a good man who taught good things. But some of the things He said forces us to make a decision about what we believe. For example: When Jesus taught His followers how to pray, he began with:

"Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." [Matthew 6:9-10]

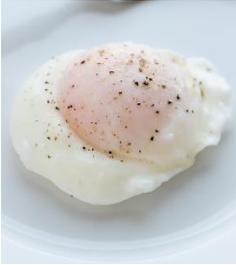
He was calling God the Creator, "Father", and referred to God's "kingdom", and a "heaven".

Jesus also said:

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." [John 14:6]

This causes offence to some religious leaders, because it's a claim some believe no one should make: to be the way to God, and the one true standard of truth and source of life!

He even talked about resurrection from the dead...



So, was he just a nice guy, who did kind things, but a bit delusional about his identity and supernatural ability? Can we just accept Jesus as a good teacher in history, and ignore his actual life and the parts of his teaching that challenge the ‘norms’ of behaviour, physics, and philosophy? Here’s what thinker and theologian, C.S.Lewis (author of the Narnia stories) says:

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

— C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

A God, a Kingdom, a Heaven. A way, truth and life.

Jesus’ life and words require faith to believe in. Everything about Him forces us to think outside the box of evolutionary fluke, a limited material reality of 5 senses, and ‘nothingness’ when we die.

There is more... much, much more.

A Story to Explain Your Story

The Bible reveals that:

- We’re created by God for a purpose, beyond just surviving this world;
- there is a heaven and a hell;
- there is life now in this age, but there is also another age to come, after this life on earth;
- we are, in a sense, infected with sin that corrupts and destroys, but God sent His Son Jesus, to save us from sin.

They are some significant ‘headlines’!

But Jesus was a master of story telling and the following is a parable (story) that helps us understand how some of these parts fit together, and where we fit in as well.

Luke chapter 19

11 While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. 12 He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

14 "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

15 "He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

16 "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'

17 "'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

18 "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

19 "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

20 "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. 21 I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.'

22 "His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?'

24 "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.'

25 "'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!'



26 "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 27 But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them - bring them here and kill them in front of me.'"

This parable was told to Jewish people, 2000 years ago, while their nation was being ruled by a foreign power: the Roman empire. The Jewish people believed that God would one day send someone to be their king, restore their kingdom and (hopefully) kick out the Romans from their land....

Those who were following Jesus at the time, were hopeful that Jesus would be that king, their saviour. He was indeed their King and Saviour, but not the way they expected. This parable was given to help them understand.

In the story, the 'man of noble birth' is Jesus. He was born, but belonged to a special lineage – a heavenly heritage [see Luke 1:26-35]. Specifically, Jesus is the Son of God and heir of God's throne, the throne above all thrones of the eternal Kingdom of God.

When Jesus said, he "went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return", He is making 3 very important points:

1. Jesus knew that he would one day be betrayed by his own people, handed over to the Romans, and killed. But God would raise him from the dead 3 days later, and after that time, he would ascend to heaven. Heaven, is the 'distant country' in the parable.
2. In heaven Jesus would be made King over all God's creation.
3. And then, one day, Jesus will return to earth...

The Jews who were following him at the time, were hoping Jesus would be made king immediately, on earth and rule over them. Jesus was explaining he would first be made king in Heaven, before returning to earth as King of all.

Before the man in the parable goes 'to a distant country' (heaven), he first gives some of his earthly property ('minas' a type of money or value) to his servants, and commissions them: "Put this money to work until I come back".

Jesus has entrusted the things of earth to us, UNTIL he comes back. This earth, we know is a very small speck in the vast universe. To us, it's large and important – vital. But in the scheme of things, it's very small. So was the amount of money being entrusted to the servants in this parable. But they were all warned: the man whose property they were being given,



was coming back. There would be a reporting in, an accounting for what they have been entrusted with. So too, we will have to give an account to Jesus for what He has given us in this life.

Incredibly, in this story, Jesus said that some of the subjects of the man, hated him; they didn't want him to be made king!

Jesus is pointing to some of the Jews of the day that didn't like Jesus, and were plotting his death. But in the parable, it says that the man "was made king ...and returned home."

As soon as he returned home, he sent for the servants to report and give an account with what he had entrusted to them. The man, now king, had expected they would have produced something from what they had been given.

In the parable, three servant's stories are recorded.

Two of the servants had used the man's money entrusted to them, to gain even more. They brought to the king, the whole sum. And Jesus reveals His heart, as the King that will one day be judge over all. He says:

"Well done, my good servant!" his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

Jesus, who will one day return as the king over all nations, kingdoms and peoples of all times, will require every person to report to him and give an account of what they have been given. His intention in entrusting his servants with small amounts of earthly resource, was so he could find out who would be trustworthy and faithful. As King of a vast and eternal Kingdom, Jesus WANTS to share his Kingdom with people; to give them whole areas of his Kingdom to rule over. But he first trusts us with this small, temporary planet; this short life with people on earth. Those who prove "trustworthy in this very small matter", will be given parts of the more significant, glorious, eternal kingdom in the age to come.

Jesus talks about this in other parts of the Bible:

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'" [Matthew 25:34]

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." [Luke 12:32]



This world, these times, even this whole universe, is only temporary, and a 'small matter' in God's eyes. But it was created for us as a time and place to train and prepare us for the real Kingdom God has always had in mind for his children. He WANTS to give us something wonderful and eternal; it has been prepared in advance for us, and it pleases him to give it to us. BUT, it's conditional...

In the parable, the servant that returned only what was given to him, was judged by his



own words. He had judged the master, as a 'hard man', taking what wasn't his. So, the master judges him harshly and takes from the servant what wasn't his. The resource he was entrusted with is now given to someone who had proven faithful; that servant could be trusted to produce even more with it.

So, there will come a day, that Jesus will return, as King of heaven and earth. He will call everyone of us before his throne, to give an account of what we were trusted to do. He hopes that we prove to be faithful to him. But if we're not, great will be the regret and anguish...

This parable speaks to the intention of God our Creator, through Jesus Christ. God *wants* us to be sons and daughters that inherit his eternal Kingdom. This has always been His plan. But he is just, and perfect, and must judge each person according to his perfect standard. The Bible refers to this as 'the Day': the day that we appear before Jesus' throne and books are opened that have recorded every day of our lives. There will be no secrets; all must give an account to our King.

This booklet is only part 1 on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It deals with the intention of God, and the bigger picture of eternal life that we were created to inherit. This world is temporary. Our bodies are temporary. God has in mind for us something far greater and permanent. He has prepared for us an eternal kingdom that includes a new heaven and a new earth. And this is what He promises his faithful ones on that Day:

³ *"Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

⁵ *He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"*

[Revelation 21]

How things are now, the decay, the brokenness, the poverty, abuse and division, are the results of what people have done with what God has given them here on earth. That is an 'order' that is temporary and which God will end.



But in the age to come, after we have died, those who are judged faithful, will be trusted with a kingdom that has a perfect order, and where there is no longer any decay, brokenness, inequity, or even sickness or death. That's what you have really been created for...

So, take hope. There is more. This isn't 'it'.

But we do need to learn more about God, His ways, and what Jesus expects of us on earth. Be sure to read part 2, that reveals the problem of 'sin' and Jesus' provision so we can be freed from its power, and brought into the life that is eternal.

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Please email our office if you would like a copy of parts 2 and 3 in this series:

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