



Old Testament Reading – Job 19:21-29
New Testament Reading – 1 John 5:1-12

In Search of the Old Paths

“I Believe in Life Everlasting, Amen”

John 3:1-16

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The Apostle's Creed begins with our faith in God the Father and ends with our hope of everlasting life. In between are 12 essential doctrines of the Christian faith that one must believe to turn that hope into reality.

- According to a recent survey of regular church attenders conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, many who claim to be Christians are not relying on the finished work of Christ for their salvation. They believe a person earns their place in heaven through their good works.

- While there are many reasons why this mistaken belief is prevalent among self-identified Christians, according to the survey, the main reason is that they have never heard a presentation of the full gospel, and they still aren't hearing it in the churches they are attending.

According to Jewish historians, Nicodemus, a Pharisee and one of Israel's greatest teachers, respected Jesus. In John 3:2, Nicodemus told Jesus, ***“Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”***

- By John's account, the reason Nicodemus came to Jesus at night was to avoid the ridicule he would have received from the Sanhedrin for even talking to Jesus, for they considered Him an un-ordained and self-proclaimed Rabbi.
- Nicodemus was confused about what Jesus had been teaching about the Kingdom of God, eternal life, and the need to be “born again” to enter into heaven.
- According to the Arizona Christian University survey, over half of those who claim to be Christians are confused about eternal life.
 - Only 54% of those who attend church believe they will experience heaven after their death.
 - 13% said there was no life after death.
 - 8% said they expected to go to a place of purification before they entered heaven.
 - 8% said they expected to be reincarnated.
 - 5% said that a loving God would never send anyone to hell, even if there was such a horrible place.

1. Believers have eternal life now in Christ – 1 John 5:12 – “*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*”

- The Apostle John didn't say, he who has the Son **will have** the life, but He who has the Son **has eternal life right now**.
- Everyone will live forever, either in heaven or in hell, but those who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord will begin to enjoy that relationship during the days of this life.
- Then, when we have shed this body of sin and are fully clothed in the righteousness of Christ, we will be in His presence forever.

- John 20:30-31: ***“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”***
- That “life” starts the very instant a sinner repents of their sins and receives Jesus as their Savior.
- Heaven comes down, and glory fills the souls, and God uses them as witnesses of His amazing, saving grace to those He is calling to be saved.

2. Believers Value Their Relationship with the Lord Jesus Above All Else – 1 John 5:10–12 – *“He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”*

- Our personal relationship with the Lord is the source of our eternal life – it is the essence of eternal life, for our goal is to be with Jesus forever.
- Therefore, the level of our desire for heaven is manifest by the depth of our relationship with the Lord today. **It is disingenuous to say we long to be with the Lord in heaven for eternity when we can’t carve out time to be with Him every day.**
- There may be hundreds of people that we desire to see in heaven and spend eternity with, but since the Lord Jesus Christ provided the way for us to get to heaven, He is the One with whom we want to have fellowship forever.
- The essence of heaven is the presence of Jesus. Heaven is where He is, and when we are in heaven, we will be with Him forever.

3. Eternal Life Is forever – 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 – *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.”*

- Notice the Apostle Paul said, ***“We shall always be with the Lord.”***

- John said the same thing in John 12:25: ***“He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life, will keep it to life eternal.”***
- When we love earthly things more than we love the Lord Jesus, one has to question our desire to spend eternity in heaven with the Lord.
- Our love for Him is to be supreme—above every earthly relationship and above our own self-interest. We love Him with all our heart, soul, and strength because He is the Lord our God.
- Hating this worldly life means that we are seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and trusting Him to provide the temporal things He determines to be the best for us.
- When compared to the depth of our love for the Lord, our love for everyone else, and everything else looks like “hate!”

4. Only Those Who Put Their Trust in Jesus will have Eternal life – John 3:15-16 – *“That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

- Salvation is by God’s grace alone, through our faith alone, and in Christ alone, for there is no salvation apart from the Lord, Jesus Christ. In John 14:6, Jesus said, ***“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by Me.”***
- Heaven is a real place, and according to Revelation 21-22, our eyes have not seen anything as beautiful as heaven will be. While heaven will be filled with real people, with glorified bodies, perfected minds, and holy spirits, without the Lord Jesus, even heaven itself would get boring.
- In John 17:3, Jesus made this statement to God the Father: ***“This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”***
- Jesus defined eternal life as knowing God and knowing Jesus Christ.
- While eternal life means we will live forever, the real essence of that forever life is to enjoy that personal, intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, which begins in this life, when we receive Him as our Savior and Lord, and continues through our physical death, and then, into our new home in heaven.
- What is the level of your longing for heaven right now?
- While 54% of church attenders believe they will go to heaven when they die, they still waste a lot of time trying to create a little bit of heaven on this earth.

- Many times, God must take away the heaven we created, because it is robbing us of the anticipated joys of heaven.
- King Solomon is widely considered one of the wealthiest and wisest people who ever lived. His fortune—often estimated in the trillions of dollars in today's currency— allowed him to experience all this life had to offer, and this was his conclusion: **“Vanity of vanities. All is vanity”** (Ecclesiastes 1:1 KJV).

5. The Last Word of the Creed – Amen!

- The word itself comes from the Old Testament and means “So be it,” or “I agree,” or “Yes, that is true.”
- The writers closed the Apostle's Creed with the word “Amen,” affirming that the things they had written were true. And we say “Amen” because we believe every word of the creed is true.