

DEBATE IV/TOPIC II/OPENING ARGUMENT (a)

Warner - Fields Debate: Premillennialism (Chiliasm) vs. Amillennialism

The One Hope Of The Christian's Calling

By Norm Fields

Introduction: One Hope Of Your Calling

Eph 4:4-6, There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

In the above passage Paul refers to the unity of the spirit and gives seven points of that unity. The one that pertains specifically to this discussion is the "one hope of your calling." Just as there is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father; so, too, is there one hope. It is the one hope of your calling. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:14, that call comes from the preaching of the gospel. The "one hope of your calling," then, is that uniting hope of every Christian resulting from obedience to the gospel of Christ.

Mr. Warner believes that the Christian's hope is an earthly kingdom. It is my task in this paper to demonstrate the eternal salvation of heaven as the Christian's one hope.

A New Testament Definition Of The One Hope

Hope In The New Testament

The word translated "hope" in Ephesians 4:4 (Gr. *ἐλπίδι*) refers to "anticipation, expectation."¹ It is used 53 times in the New Testament text. Of those 53 occurrences, not all refer to the "one hope of your calling." For example, we can immediately dismiss Acts 16:19 and 27:20 from our discussion as unrelated to the "one hope" of Ephesians 4:4. In Acts 16:19 it is used in reference to the loss of income expected from a fortunetelling slave girl. In Acts 27:20 it refers to the giving up of any expectation of being saved from the sea. Obviously these passages, while using the same Greek word,

¹ Thayer's Greek Lexicon

do not refer to the hope of the gospel's call. We will examine several uses of the word, however, that are descriptive and defining of the "one hope."

The first instance of this word in the New Testament is found in Acts 2:26.

*Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in **hope**:*

This is a quotation of a prophetic statement concerning the resurrection of the Messiah from the grave. His flesh resting "in hope" means that he went to the grave expecting to be resurrected therefrom. Peter quotes it here as evidence for Jesus being the Christ of prophecy (Acts 2:29-32).

*Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, **he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne**; He seeing this before **spake of the resurrection of Christ**, that his soul was not left in [Hades], neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hat **God raised up**, whereof we all are witnesses.*

There can be no doubt that "hope" is used in this context in reference to the resurrection of Christ from the grave. It is not used again until Acts 16:19, which we have addressed above as being unrelated.

It is when we come to the passages recounting Paul's trials that we get a clearer picture of how this word is used in reference to the "one hope" of the gospel's call (Eph. 4:4). In Acts 23:6 Paul refers to the "hope and resurrection of the dead."

*But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: **of the hope and resurrection of the dead** I am called in question.*

The term "hope and resurrection" does not refer to two separate things but should be understood as "the hope of the resurrection from the dead" (TEG, NIV, NLT, et. al.).² Not only can the *καί* ("and") in the text be understood in this way,³ but such an understanding would also be keeping with other occurrences of *ἐλπίδι* (hope), as we will see. Again, there can be no question here that Paul is using the word "hope" in reference to the resurrection of the dead.

² The Everlasting Gospel (TEG), New International Version (NIV), New Living Translation (NLT).

³ "Some take the 'hope and resurrection of the dead' for a hendiadys" (Pulpit Commentary). A hendiadys is the expression of a single idea by two words connected with "and," e.g., *nice and warm*, when one could be used to modify the other, as in *nicely warm*. (New Oxford American Dictionary).

In Acts 24:15, when Paul makes his case before Felix, he says,

*But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and **have hope toward God**, which they themselves also allow, **that there shall be a resurrection of the dead**, both of the just and unjust. And **herein do I exercise myself**, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men (Acts 24:14-16).*

Paul, again, uses the word “hope” in reference to the “resurrection of the dead.” When he says “herein do I exercise myself,” it is the hope of the resurrection to which he refers. That is, Paul’s diligence to maintain a pure conscience toward God was in view of the resurrection of the dead. It was in view of the fact that both just and unjust would be raised.

We are still in the same context of Paul’s trials when we come to the next occurrence of “hope.” It is when Paul is making his defense before king Agrippa, that he says,

*And now I stand and am judged for **the hope of the promise** made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. **For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews**. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, **that God should raise the dead?***

This is a very significant reference to the “hope” Paul would later refer to as the “one hope of your calling.” He says it was “the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers.” That “hope” was the *same “hope” that Paul was being accused of the Jews over*. Understand that! This “hope,” to which Paul has been referring all through the context of his trials, is unquestionably the resurrection of the dead. Now he says it is the same hope of the promise made of God unto their fathers! J.W. McGarvey makes an interesting comment regarding this,

“[Paul] interprets the promise made by God to the fathers, by which he doubtless means the promise, ‘In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,’ as referring to the resurrection, because that is the consummation of all the blessings of the gospel.”⁴

Gareth Reese, a commentator from Mr. Warner’s same denomination, has this to say about Paul’s “hope,”

⁴ McGarvey, J.W. “A Commentary On Acts Of Apostles” Guardian of Truth Foundation. Bowling Green, KY. pg. 279

“The one promise that was made over and over through the Old Testament ages was that Messiah was coming; and when He did arrive, all the nations of the earth would be blessed....the promise of a future state, and a resurrection of the dead.”⁵

There is absolutely no doubt that Paul viewed the atoning work of Christ, including the promise of resurrection resulting from it, as the hope to which the Old Testament promises pointed.

Seeing how Paul repeatedly refers to the resurrection from the dead as the “hope” makes it very clear what he is referring to as the “hope of Israel” in Acts 28:20.

*“For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that **for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.**”*

Notice, he says the “hope of Israel” is the reason for his being imprisoned. We have already seen where he said the reason for his being detained was his preaching the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:6; 24:15; 26:6). So far, every time Paul has made reference to the hope, resulting from obedience to the gospel, it is a direct reference to the resurrection of the dead.

There are several references to “hope” throughout the epistles. These are mostly general references to “hope” as an element of the Christian religion and, for the most part, without definition or explanation as to what that “hope” is. 1 Thessalonians 2:19 is clearly in reference to the resurrection of the dead.

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

In his letter to Titus Paul makes two references to the “hope of eternal life” (Titus 1:2; 3:7).

*In **hope of eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

*That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to **the hope of eternal life.***

“The hope of eternal life” is the expectation of being raised up at the last hour!

In Hebrews 10:23, where the King James has “hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering,” the NKJV has the word translated correctly as “hope.”

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

⁵ Reese, Gareth. “A Commentary On Acts” College Press. pg. 875

This is an example of a common usage of “hope” in the epistles. It is used as an exhortation to live faithfully to God looking forward to the resurrection of the dead. Because we know that this life is not the end of our existence, but that there will be a resurrection of the just and unjust (Acts 24:15), we should “live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age; looking for the blessed *hope* and glorious appearing of our great God and saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:12, 13).

In 1 Peter 1:3, Peter uses this word, the same word he used in Acts 2:26, to refer to the “living hope” Christians have as a result of the “resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Then he says again in 1:21,

Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

The last use of this word in the New Testament is in 1 John 3:3.

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that *hath this hope in him* purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:2-3).*

Here, again, is an exhortation to holy living based on the knowledge of the resurrection at the coming of our Lord. Notice too that John says Christian’s don’t yet see what they shall be. Obviously, what we “shall be” is different from what we are. If it were not another manner of being, something other than a physical existence, then it could not be said that “what we shall be” has not yet been “revealed.” We know a physical existence now, it has been revealed. However, what we shall be has yet to be revealed. We’ll discuss this again below.

A Spiritual or Physical Hope?

As we look at the use of the word translated “hope” in Ephesians 4:4 it becomes abundantly clear what that “one hope” is, it is the resurrection of the dead at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. But my friend on the other side of this discussion will say that he believes in the resurrection of the dead, as I am sure he does. However, we need to realize that in the resurrection *both* just and unjust will be raised. As we have seen, Paul makes reference to that fact in Acts 24:15. We can add to this John 5:28, 29.

*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **all that are in the graves** shall hear his voice, and **shall come forth**; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

The two segments of humanity, good and evil, will be raised in the same hour! Their resurrection will be unto one of two ends, life or damnation. So there is a clear contrast between the two distinct final destinations, the good enter into life and the evil into damnation. This contrast is very significant to identifying the “hope” of the gospel’s call.

According to Mr. Warner, the one will enter into an eternal *earthly kingdom*. But wouldn’t that mean that the “damnation” would also have to be a physical, material, damnation? Will Warner say that the damned will spend eternity in a physical, material, lake of fire?

The damned will be cast into outer darkness where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 25:30; 24:51). When we see the contrast between the two segments of humanity in the resurrection it is clear that the resurrection will be unto a spiritual existence, not a physical one.

In Matthew 25:31-46 you have a description of what will happen when Christ comes again to raise the dead. The eternal destination of the righteous is described in verse 34.

*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit **the kingdom prepared for you** from the foundation of the world:*

It is described as “the kingdom prepared for you.” It had already been prepared “from the foundation of the world.” As we relate this to the “hope” of the resurrection of the dead, we see Jesus referred to as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; cf. 1 Pet. 1:20). The atoning sacrifice of Christ to take away the sins of mankind was foreordained before the foundation of the world. That atoning work cannot be separated from the resurrection. If he had not been raised from the grave then no one else could have the “hope” of the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:13-17). Therefore, that reference to the kingdom being “prepared for you from the foundation of the world” had to include the resurrection of Christ from the dead to offer the sacrifice for our sins in heaven before the throne of God (Heb. 9:24-28).

After making atonement for the sins of man, Christ was seated at the right hand of God in heaven (Heb. 1:3). In John 14:1-3, Jesus told the disciples that he was going to *prepare a place for them*.

*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place for***

you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Jesus sits at the right hand of God in heaven. He went there to offer his blood as the sacrifice for our sins. He says that, having entered into heaven with his own blood, he prepared a place for his disciples to be there with him.

Warner will, no doubt, say that the place prepared is yet in the future and refers to an earthly kingdom, a material place for a physical existence. However, such a response is not accurate to the statement of the text, nor will it hold up under the contrast between the two distinct destinies for those raised - life or damnation.

Above we have seen the description of the resurrection unto life. Now let's notice the resurrection unto damnation.

In Matthew 25:41, Jesus says,

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Notice, the place of damnation is also a place prepared. It was prepared for the devil and his angels. Should we understand that this is a material, physical, place of condemnation? Surely not! And, if not, then why would we suppose that the other side of the resurrection will be a physical, material, existence? There are two spiritual eternal destinations under consideration here. They have both been specifically prepared for the reward of the righteous and the condemnation of the wicked. They are both spiritual habitations.

1 Corinthians 15

Having identified the "one hope" as the expectation of the resurrection from the dead, we can learn much about that "hope" by examining the resurrection passages. Passages like 1 Corinthians 15:50-55.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Cor. 15:50-55).

Notice Paul's explicit statement that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." However, that is exactly what the other side in this debate says. And, lest my opponent attempt to explain this away as talking about genealogy, the contrast throughout this chapter is between physical and spiritual. The context has absolutely nothing at all to do with genealogy, or physical descent.

The "one hope" refers to the expectation of the resurrection. It is the resurrection unto life (Jn. 5:28, 29). But not physical life, as Warner says. It is spiritual life. Notice, earlier in the chapter Paul says,

*So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. **It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.** There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:42-44, NKJV).*

As we saw earlier with the reference to 1 John 3:2-3, while we are limited to this physical existence we do not yet see what we shall become. It is other than physical and we have no experiential knowledge outside of a physical, material existence. Therefore, there is no way for us to know what it will be like to have a purely spiritual existence in a spiritual body, instead of a physical one. But what we do know is that it is different from the physical existence we now know. The "one hope" of the gospel's call is a spiritual hope, the expectation of a spiritual resurrection, not a physical. Paul continues his contrast between the physical we know now and the spiritual nature of the resurrection.

*The first **man was of the earth, made of dust**; the second Man is **the Lord from heaven**. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And **as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man** (1 Cor. 15:47-49, NKJV).*

Clearly and irrefutably, the resurrection from the dead - the one hope of the gospel's call - is a resurrection to a spiritual existence, not a physical one.

Where will the resurrected reside?

Where will this spiritual existence be realized? We already know *when* it will be realized, when the dead are raised. But, *where* will it be realized. Paul makes this clear also.

*But **now is Christ risen from the dead**, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the **resurrection of the dead**. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's **at his coming**. Then cometh the*

end, *when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power* (1 Cor. 15:20-24).

So the *where* of this spiritual existence is *where God the Father resides!*

And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive (1 Kings 8:30, 39, 43, 49; 2 Chronicles 6:21, 30, 33, 39).

The the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven (2 Chronicles 30:27).

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16, 45, 48).

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name (Matthew 6:9).

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 7:21).

Not only is God the Father in heaven but Christ is in heaven at the right hand of God.

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven (John 3:13).

And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; nether is there respect of persons with him (Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 4:1).

We have already seen that Christ promised his disciples to return for them so that they could be where he is (John 14:1-3). Where is he? In heaven! He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:14). Where is the Father? In heaven! Yet where does Warner say the “hope” of the Christian lies? On earth! Who can believe it!

How many times does the Bible have to tell us what Christians have “in heaven” before we believe that Christians will be “in heaven”?

- The Christian’s reward is “in heaven” (Matt. 5:12; Lk. 6:23).
- The Christian’s treasures are laid up “in heaven” (Matt. 6:20; 19:21).
- The Christian’s citizenship is “in heaven” (Phil. 3:30).
- The Christian’s hope is laid up “in heaven” (Col. 1:5).

- Christians are registered “in heaven” (Heb. 12:23).
- The Christian’s inheritance is reserved “in heaven” (1 Pet. 1:4).

The Christian has all of these things “in heaven” but Warner says the Christian is going to live on earth. Make sense of it if you can!

So, *when Christ comes again* there will be a resurrection of the dead, both just and unjust. The just will be separated from the unjust. The wicked will be cast into outer darkness, which is eternal condemnation. The righteous will enter into heaven, the way having been prepared by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, to ever be with the Lord.

No Earthly Hope!

It is a common aspect of the various forms of Premillennialism to have Christ living on this earth once more. However, such an idea simply cannot be harmonized with biblical doctrine. We’ve already looked at several passages describing what Christ will do when he comes back. He will:

- Raise the dead (Jn. 5:28, 29).
- Change the living in the twinkling of an eye from physical to spiritual (1 Cor. 15:51, 52).
- Call us before his judgment seat (2 Cor. 5:10).
- Separate between the wicked and the righteous (Matt. 25:31-46).
- Cast the wicked into condemnation (Jn. 5:29).
- Take the righteous back to heaven to ever be with him there (Jn. 5:29; 1 Cor. 15:24; 1 Thess. 4:17).

There is no earthly hope here! Not only is no earthly hope described in Christ’s second coming, but the very opposite is revealed. When Christ returns the second time it will be the end of material existence!

The Destruction Of The Earth And All Physical Matter

In 2 Peter 3:10 and following, Peter describes the destruction of the earth, and all matter, that will take place at the second coming of Christ.

*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which **the heavens shall pass away** with a great noise, and **the elements shall melt with fervent heat**, the*

earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

This vivid description of creation's destruction at the second coming of Christ cannot be limited to just this earth, the third planet from the sun. It is the entire material creation that will be destroyed. Peter says "the heavens shall pass away." The word "elements," used here twice by Peter, has reference to the smallest part of that which is built upon it. It refers to "the elements from which all things come, the material causes of the universe."⁶ Vine's says the word στοιχειον (elements) "used in the plural, primarily signifies any first things from which others in a series, or a composite whole take their rise."⁷ So Peter has the destruction of the very material realm of existence under consideration in his description of Christ's second coming.

The apostle John likewise describes the second coming of Christ as the time at which the earth will be destroyed with no material existence remaining.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them (Rev. 20:11).

John does not just say that the earth and heaven were destroyed. He says that there no longer remained any place for them. There will be no material universe for a material earth and heaven to abide within. When Christ returns it will be the end of material existence!

The New Heavens and New Earth - Spiritual Not Physical

When we see the nature of the final destruction that will take place when Christ comes again it becomes abundantly clear that the new heavens and new earth, referred to by Peter, is a spiritual realm and not a physical one.

The word used for "new" (καινουσ) means "pertaining to not being well known previously but being significant - previously unknown, previously unheard of, new."⁸ It does not mean new in creation or age, but new in use. The significance of Peter's choice of words cannot be understated. Notice:

⁶ Thayer's Greek Lexicon

⁷ Vine's Expository Dictionary Of Biblical Words

⁸ Louw and Nida Greek Lexicon.

Of the two most common words for “new” since the classical period, namely, νεος and καινις, the former signifies “what was not there before,” “what has only just arisen or appeared,” the latter “what is new and distinctive” as compared with other things. νεος is new in time or origin, i.e., young, with a suggestion of immaturity or of lack of respect for the old. καινος is what is new in nature, different from the usual, impressive, better than the old, superior in value or attraction.⁹

In reference to the existence after the destruction of this material realm, Peter does not use the word for “new” that means something newly created. Rather, he uses the word that means “different from the usual.” The “new” heavens and “new” earth will be “new” to Christians because it will be a spiritual existence “different” from what we have known before. It will be a “new” nature of habitation as compared to that which we now know. And, what is it that we know to be reality now - and, thus, not something that will be newly created - that will be new to us when this physical reality is done away with. It is the spiritual habitation that we will enter into when Christ comes back to bring this physical to a close.

It is not possible that the “new heavens and new earth” refers to a literal physical “renovation” of this existing one because Peter said that this present physical material universe will melt with fervent heat. This current physical existence will be so totally and completely destroyed that even the smallest part of matter will be “burned up.” So what will there be of this present earth to renovate? What will there be left of the material universe to “renovate”?

Look at the words Peter uses for the destruction of the present creation:

- Burned up - κατακαιω, to burn down (to the ground), i.e. consume wholly,¹⁰ to reduce to ashes.¹¹
- Dissolved - λυομενων, to cause to cease to exist, to cause to cease, to come to an end, to cause to become nothing, to put an end to.¹²
- On fire - πυρουμενοι, to burn with fire, to set on fire, to kindle.¹³

⁹ Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Kittel 10 vol.)

¹⁰ Strong’s Greek Dictionary

¹¹ Louw and Nida Greek Lexicon

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ Thayer’s Greek Lexicon

- Fervent heat - *καυσουμενα*, to burn up, set fire to.¹⁴

There is absolutely nothing about the language used by Peter that would indicate, in any way, a “cleansing” fire. A fire to purge the old world of impurities so that it might be “renovated” for our eternal habitation. Peter is speaking of nothing other than the total and complete annihilation of the material universe. Therefore, the only way a material universe could be under consideration as the “new heavens and new earth” would be if it were to be a newly created heavens and earth. An idea Peter was careful to avoid by his choice of words. The “new heavens and new earth” will not be something newly created but something newly experienced by man. It can be none other than our being ushered into the heavenly realm by our Lord when returns the kingdom to the Father who is in heaven.

Conclusion

In summation of the “one hope of your calling,” we have seen:

- The identity of the “one hope” being the Christian’s expectation of being raised from the dead.
- The resurrection body will be spiritual, not physical.
- The resurrection will occur when Christ returns the second time.
- At that time he will cast the wicked into eternal condemnation and welcome the righteous into eternal life.
- That eternal life will be enjoyed in heaven, God’s dwelling place.
- That eternal life will not be on this earth for this earth will no longer exist.
- That eternal life will be enjoyed in a realm of existence that has not been newly created but is a new form of existence than what we have known previously.

The faithful study of God’s word, and humble submission thereto, can lead us to no other conclusion. Let us therefore live so as to enter into that heavenly realm. Having heard the gospel’s call and believing its teaching of Christ and his kingdom (Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Acts 8:12). Believing it, repenting of our sins and confessing that we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 2:38; 8:37; Rom. 10:9, 10). And, having made that confession with the mouth unto salvation, being baptized into Christ for the remission

¹⁴ *ibid.*

of sins (Rom. 6:3, 4; Acts 22:16). Thus, prepared to live eternally with him in heaven if we continue in the faith to the conclusion of our lives in this body (Col. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:10).