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Sermon Notes

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The Eternally Glorious Backward Look, Week 6

Our Sins and Our Sufferings Fully Redeemed; Memories of the Damned; Our Education in Evil Consummated; How Much Heaven Do You Want?

The Premise: In heaven, God will reveal his mighty works in history to his redeemed, to the praise of his own glory and for the wonder and joy of his people.

I. Our Sins and Sufferings Painlessly Remembered for the Glory of God

A. The Most Difficult Aspect: Remembering Our Sins and Sufferings

B. Many Verses Imply No Memory of Sin

“It is I who sweep away your transgressions for my own sake and remember your sins no more.” (Isa. 43:25, HCSB)

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.... For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34)

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” (Heb. 10:16-17)

As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. (Ps. 103:12)

He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7:19)

C. How Does God Remember What He’s Forgotten?

1. Keep In Mind: God Never Stops Being Omniscient

a. So... the “I will forget” language is not absolute; God still knows every detail of our sins in intimate detail

b. In the Parable of the 10,000 Talents, the King remembered the debt after he forgave it

2. Atonement = covering, not removal
 - a. God cannot lie... if the sin happened, it happened
 - b. The Old Testament language of atonement is “covering”
 - i) The word translated “atonement” in the OT literally means “covering”
 - ii) So also this verse:

Romans 4:7 "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered."

- iii) So, if it is covered, it still exists... but God sees the covering (the atoning blood of Jesus) infinitely more than the sin!!

D. With No Memory of Sin, How Then Would We Praise God for His Grace?

1. Paul was completely forgiven when he recounted his own past sins in 1 Timothy, yet the Holy Spirit led him to remember his past life:

1 Timothy 1:13-16 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴ The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-- of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.

2. God's greatest glory = the redemption of sinners; WORSHIP is tied to grace, and grace is tied to sin

Ephesians 1:3-7 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

3. That story must be put on display for all eternity

Ephesians 2:3-9 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in

*transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ **in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.** ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.*

The eternal display of the riches of his grace in heaven must have our sinfulness as a backdrop, or the lavish grace loses its meaning and its radiant glory.

E. Memory, But No Pain: "Do Not Be Angry with Yourselves"

1. Central verse again...

Revelation 21:4 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.

Shame for sin is extremely painful, and often results in mourning and crying. It will not happen in heaven. Our memories will cause us no pain.

You may ask, "How is that even possible?"

2. Joseph's admonishment to his brothers

Genesis 45:4-5 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!" ⁵ And now, **do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.**

Basic idea: a fuller revelation of God's plan swallows up all human shame and grief, since our actions were intrinsically woven into the tapestry of God's eternal purposes. Joseph exhorted his brothers to look beyond their own sinful actions (and they were sinful... Joseph is not minimizing that!) to see the glory of God's marvelous plan. Joseph would never have been in Egypt if his brothers had not sold him there. God's wisdom swallows up our shame.

Consummated in heaven: detailed memory, but all the pain is swallowed up in glorious grace

F. The Decisive Separation Consummated

1. Essential to this question (how can I remember my sins and not feel any negative feelings)... "It was not I who did it!"

Romans 7:17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

Romans 7:20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

2. We have been made new by the gospel... the person who did those sins no longer lives, but has been replaced by this new creation

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

3. In heaven, we will be able to say with permanent decisiveness, "I am not that person... the person who did those sins. I am perfectly a new creation!!"

G. Heavenly Clothing, and No Scarlet Letter

1. Though there will be a perfect memory of all our earthly deeds, including our sins, there will be no shame either vertically (toward God) or horizontally (in front of others)
2. Therefore, we should not imagine that we will wear any sort of "Scarlet Letter" in heaven, as though everyone will see and know our shameful actions that we did in our former lives
3. We should seek to understand the heavenly clothing—the white robes—that God provides for the radiant display of glory of the redeemed in heaven

Revelation 6:9-11 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer...

Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Revelation 7:13-14 Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes-- who are they, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴ I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

4. The robes are certainly representative of Christ's imputed righteousness; but also of the righteous life and deeds that followed our conversion

Revelation 19:6-8 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our

Lord God Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

Revelation 22:12-14 [Jesus said] "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. ¹⁴ ¶ "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

5. We will not see Paul in heaven and say, "You're Paul... the blasphemer, persecutor, and violent man!" Whereupon he would answer, "Yes, but I also planted some churches and wrote some helpful letters!"
6. Paul will wear a crown of glory for his good works, and that's what we will see... not his "shameful nakedness"

Revelation 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

H. Foreground vs. Background Knowledge

1. Since we will not be omniscient, we will not be able to think of everything at once like God does
2. So the things we learn, we will not forget... but there is foreground knowledge and background knowledge
3. The knowledge of the details of others' lives (and our own) will only serve as necessary "backstory", essential to see the fulness of the glory of God, but not the main point
4. Paul's life as a persecutor of the church will only be known in the context of God's glorious rescue of him and of those he persecuted.
5. Paul himself will stand in glory 1) as covered in the righteousness of Christ and 2) as a faithful servant of God.
6. The "wood, hay, and straw" will be burned away, and the "gold, silver, costly stones" alone will shine.

I. Our Earthly Sufferings Fully Redeemed

1. Christ's own sufferings will never be forgotten

Revelation 5:5-6 Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." ⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne

2. The example of Joseph's sufferings and God's glorious purpose

Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

3. Paul rejoices in the sufferings entailed in planting churches

Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

4. The sufferings of the martyrs are remembered and shine in glory

Revelation 6:9-11 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

It is clear that this refers to the intermediate state, not to eternity in heaven... since there are still more martyrs who will die. But the martyrs do remember their own sufferings in heaven... so also these:

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

5. All of the small and great afflictions of our lives will make sense in heaven

6. So... William Cowper "God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain."

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sov' reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
 The clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy and shall break
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
 But trust Him for His grace;
 Behind a frowning providence
 He hides a smiling face.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
 And scan His work in vain;
**God is His own interpreter,
 And He will make it plain.**

II. Memories of the Damned

A. Two Ways to Understand This Phrase

1. Will the damned be remembered?
2. What will the damned remember?

B. Key Verse... AGAIN!:

Revelation 21:4 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.

C. Jehovah's Witnesses & Annihilation

1. They teach that there is no eternal conscious torment for those that are not saved
2. Instead, they are annihilated
3. This is unbiblical; many verses teach the eternal conscious torment of the damned

Revelation 14:11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name."

4. However, many Christians may think that the redeemed in heaven will absolutely no memory of the damned... it's a different kind of annihilation! Our memories wiped clean entirely of them

D. The Rich Man and Lazarus

There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ And he called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame." ²⁵ But Abraham said, "Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us." ²⁷ And he said, "Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house-- ²⁸ for I have five brothers--so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment." ²⁹ But Abraham said, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them." ³⁰ And he said, "No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." ³¹ He said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead." (Luke 16:19-31)

1. It is clear that the Rich Man remembers his earthly life... for Father Abraham charges him to "Remember" his good things in his lifetime... and also his failure to care for Lazarus's needs; he also remembers his brothers still on earth
2. It is just as clear that Abraham himself remembers how the Rich Man lived
3. Lazarus in heaven also must remember his own life and sufferings; and since he is at Abraham's side, he has a clear view of the Rich Man's sufferings in hell, as does Abraham.

E. God's Justice on Display

1. The Lamb and the angels are fully aware of the sufferings of the damned

If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name. (Rev. 14:9-11)

2. Clearly the angels do not in any way shrink back from viewing the torments of the damned
3. The angels vindicate God's justice in judging the earth

“Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!” And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!” (Rev. 16:5-7)

4. Why would God hide all this from us, his children?

Now if Jesus and the angels (as well as the heavenly altar) are all very much aware of the sins of the damned and the justice of God’s wrath poured out on them, it is very reasonable to assume the redeemed in heaven are aware as well. Why would God hide it from them? He is telling us now in the scripture that it will happen. How much more will we be able to look on it with resurrected eyes and worship God’s justice in it with resurrected hearts?

Keep this in mind:

John 15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

God is not ashamed of what he’s doing with the damned, and will not try to hide it from us in heaven.

F. The Inhabitants of the New Heaven and New Earth: Isaiah 66

1. Another key passage on this is found at the very end of Isaiah
2. There, he is talking about the New Heaven and New Earth
3. The final verses make this amazing assertion

“For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me,” says the LORD, “so shall your offspring and your name remain. ²³ From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me,” declares the LORD. ²⁴ “And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” (Isa. 66:22-24)

4. Jesus quoted this in talking about hell

Mark 9:47-49 It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." ⁴⁹ Everyone will be salted with fire.

5. So, the inhabitants of the New Heaven and New Earth will GO OUT AND LOOK at the rebels in their torment... God is not hiding it, and they are not unable to “take it”... just like the angels

G. The Rules Will Be Very Different Then

1. Now... anguish over the lost is commanded and displayed in the Bible
 - a. Jesus wept over Jerusalem

“Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.” (Lk. 19:41-42)

- b. Paul was in anguish over unsaved Jews

“I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart” (for the lost among his fellow Jews.) (*Rom. 9:2*)

Paul even went so far as to say he’d be willing to trade his own salvation for theirs

2. God uses this present anguish to fuel evangelism and missions

This holy agony has been used by the Holy Spirit in every generation to motivate missionaries to make extreme exertions to win lost people to Christ while there is still time. Essential to this is the knowledge that even the most hardened sinner can still repent and find salvation through faith in Christ before they die. So we should pour out tears and pour out effort while we have time to reach lost people, whether family members, neighbors, coworkers, or individuals in unreached people groups in distant lands.

Before he went as a missionary to India, William Carey worked as both a shoemaker and a teacher. When he became convinced of the urgency of the plight of the “pagans” in the distant lands who had never heard of Christ, he sought to enflame others with a like passion. He made a shoe-leather globe and held it up before his pupils with great tears, crying aloud, “These are all pagans! Pagans!” It was absolutely intolerable to Carey that they should die without him doing his utmost to bring the gospel to them.

3. However... after Judgment Day, everything changes!

We will be perfectly conformed to Christ and the reprobate will be stripped of all common grace blessings. Their refusal to love our Jesus will be confirmed for all eternity, and the sweet attributes that endeared those people to us will be gone forever. There will be nothing amiable or attractive about the reprobate

4. Then these verses will be fulfilled:

“If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!” (1 Cor. 16:22)

“Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies.” (Ps. 139:21-22)

5. Our loyalty structure will be perfect:

“Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” (Matt. 10:37)

6. Now is the “day of salvation”... but that day will be over by then

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. ² For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Charles Spurgeon’s mother prayed for him in light of this truth while he was a teenager and not yet converted. She poured out prayers and tears for him to be saved, and yearned to lead him to Christ if the Lord would work in his heart. He recounts this powerful experience:

I cannot tell how much I owe to the solemn words of my good mother.... I remember on one occasion her praying thus: “Now, Lord, if my children go on in their sins, it will not be from ignorance that they perish, and my soul must bear a swift witness against them at the day of judgment if they lay not hold of Christ.” That thought of my mother’s bearing a swift witness against me pierced my conscience... How can I ever forget when she bowed her knee, and with her arms about my neck, prayed, “Oh, that my son might live before Thee!”

7. Common Grace Blessing Entirely Gone

Unbelievers still reflected the image of God to some degree while they lived on earth. The kindly agnostic grandmother made delicious oatmeal raisin cookies; the worldly businessman gave money to the poor; the old college roommate told hilarious stories and was fun to watch a football game with. More poignantly, our own mother loved us sacrificially and cared for us every day of our lives; our precious daughter called every day and never forgot our birthdays. But they never loved Jesus. And of all the gifts of God which he lavished on them that enabled those sweet attributes, they never gave thanks to him for any of them, nor glorified him. (Rom. 1:21) And after Judgment Day, “every good and every perfect gift” which

God ever gave to them (Jas. 1:17) will be judicially stripped from them, and they will become morally, spiritually, and physically repulsive. They will be filled with rage at God, not repenting from their sins, not thinking they deserve to be in hell.

H. God's People Vindicated

1. God commands us now to be as innocent as doves... and to be willing to be sheep for the slaughter. We are not to resist evil people, but to turn the other cheek
2. Especially, we are to love our enemies and pray for those who viciously persecute us...
3. But God has said plainly he will vindicate his people over their tormenters

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom. 12:19-21)

4. God has made a clear promise that he will vindicate his suffering people; as a matter of fact, a central reason given for the wrath God pours out on the Earth in Revelation is the vengeance God says he is taking for how the wicked on Earth treated his people

Revelation 16:4-7 The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: "You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; ⁶ for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve." ⁷ And I heard the altar respond: "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."

5. Tertullian said, "The blood of martyrs is seed" for the church... HOWEVER the overwhelming majority of hate-filled persecutors of Christians do not get converted. That means there is a debt outstanding that will not be paid by the shed blood of Christ, but rather by the just wrath of God.

Hell, therefore, is the fulfillment of God's promise to avenge his saints.

I. The Persistent Widow and Lessons of Vindication

Luke 18:2-8 "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ "For some time he refused.

But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" ⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.

This display of justice hardly ever is seen in this life! Tyrants seems to prosper right to the end, and the people of God are incarcerated, tortured, and executed. So when do they get their justice? Their vindication? It must be in eternity!

J. The Reprobate Were Created to Put God on Display... But The Display Doesn't Happen (for the most part) In This World

Romans 9:22-24 *What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath-- prepared for destruction? ²³ What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory-- ²⁴ even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?*

1. If the redeemed in heaven don't see the reprobate in hell, how will they have learned the lessons of the lives of the reprobate?
2. Many reprobate live prosperous lives right to the end of their days, as Job says

Job 21:7-13 *Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power? ⁸ They see their children established around them, their offspring before their eyes. ⁹ Their homes are safe and free from fear; the rod of God is not upon them. ¹⁰ Their bulls never fail to breed; their cows calve and do not miscarry. ¹¹ They send forth their children as a flock; their little ones dance about. ¹² They sing to the music of tambourine and harp; they make merry to the sound of the flute. ¹³ They spend their years in prosperity and go down to the grave in peace.*

3. We don't know who the reprobate are in this world... only in the next!
4. God endured their wickedness with "much patience..." usually right to the end of their lives

K. The Damned Must Retain Their Identities/Histories for this Vindication to Be Meaningful

1. The specific actions of the tyrants must be addressed for his people to be vindicated
2. Many Nazi leaders fled Germany in the confusion during the final days of WWII, and ended up living out their days in peace and prosperity in South America. Some of them were captured, however, and brought to justice (like

Adolph Eichmann). Their stories and specific actions had to be told and justice meted out

3. So it must be in hell... not like some lake of molten lava in which all the wicked melt together
4. Names and stories must be retained

L. What the Damned Will Remember

1. Already addressed this in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus
2. The damned will suffer tormented memories... the opposite of Revelation 21:4: nothing but death, mourning, crying, and pain
3. The worst part will be those who had the opportunity to hear the gospel, even again and again from parents or children or close friends... and never repented
4. Deep regrets!!

On January 27, 1820, Adoniram Judson, the missionary to Burma, travelled up the Irawaddy River with his co-worker, James Colman, to the royal city of Ava to secure an audience with the Emperor of Burma, King Bagyidaw. His basic purpose was to ask for religious toleration to preach the gospel in Burma, but his deepest desire was to lead this man to faith in Christ. The Royal Palace in Ava was overwhelmingly ornate; every square inch of even the corridor that Judson travelled down to the hall where he would meet the king was covered in gold leaf. This made the gold-covered Bible he wanted to present to the king seem laughable and insignificant to a man that saw gold in whatever direction he turned his eyes. Judson and Colman were ushered into the hall to await the king, and they waited in great anticipation. Suddenly every Burman in the room threw himself down flat on the floor because the "Golden Feet had entered the room": the king had arrived. Courtney Anderson's description of this moment in time is powerful:

The man who strode unattended toward them with the proud gait and majesty of an Eastern monarch... [with] a high aspect and a commanding eye was impressive on account of his rank rather than his stature or costume. He was about twenty-eight years old, short, just a little over five feet tall, and extremely bandy-legged.... Around his legs and waist, he wore a skirtlike checked silk cloth, the patso, or the bright scarlet reserved for royalty... Although his attire was rich, the only thing about him that indicated royalty to Adoniram was the gold-sheathed sword he carried instead of a scepter.

As he drew near, he caught sight of the two kneeling missionaries, the only people in the room who dared look at him and were not stretched flat on the floor.

[Judson and Colman began to explain their purpose to the king] The king listened quietly. Then he stretched out his hand. Maung Zah [the official who had presented the missionaries to the king] crawled forward and presented the petition. His Majesty took it and deliberately read it through, from top to bottom. Meanwhile, Adoniram passed to Maung Zah a carefully abridged and edited copy of the [gospel] tract which Adoniram had written four years before. When the king had finished the petition he silently returned it to Maung Zah, who now handed him the tract. Watching the king take the tract, Adoniram prayed inwardly with all the fervor of his heart, "Oh, have mercy on Burma! Have mercy on her king!"

But King Bagyidaw merely read the opening sentences: "There is one Being who exists eternally; who is exempt from sickness, old age, and death; who is, and was, and will be, without beginning and without end. Besides this, the true God, there is no other God..."

Then he opened his hand with indifference and let the paper fall to the floor. [Courtney Anderson, *To the Golden Shore*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1956) 248-251]

There is no evidence that King Bagyidaw ever came to faith in Christ. And if he did not, there is biblical evidence that he will remember in hell the events of his life. And he will see this interview with Adoniram Judson from an entirely different point of view. He thought that what was happening was a foreigner (who should have been crawling on the ground before him) was begging the Golden Ears for mercy in order to spread his religion among his subjects. What was really happening there was the true King of kings and Lord of lords was giving this mortal sinner a chance to repent of his rebellion against heaven, a chance at eternal life in the Kingdom of God. And he let the tract slip from his fingers and walked out of the room to go sit on some cushions and watch his army parade. Oh how eternally filled with regret he will be at that moment in time! "What would he give in return for his soul?" (Mt. 16:26) If he still possessed any of his gold or royal palaces or kingly power, what percentage of it would he trade for another chance at talking with Adoniram Judson?

III. Our Education in Evil Consummated

A. The Eternal "Center for Disease Control"

B. The Education We Signed Up For

Genesis 2:9 In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:17 you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.

C. Evil Must Be Remembered in Heaven... or What Was the Point?

1. Six thousand years of history on evil

D. Total Conformity to Christ

Hebrews 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy

E. If We Don't Know Evil, How Can We Hate It?

F. God's Glory in Specific Evils Defeated

1. E.g. racism... "us vs. them"

G. Prevention of a Future Fall: "Never Again!"

1. The Holocaust Museum's stated intention: that something like that would never happen again
2. Knowledge of the evil is part of the prevention

H. Arabian Nights' Story: The Man Who Never Laughed Again

IV. How Much Heaven Do You Want?

A. Edwards's Applications

First, let not your heart go after the things of this world, as your chief good.

Indulge not yourself in the possession of earthly things as though they were to satisfy your soul. ... If you would seek heaven, your affections must be taken off from the pleasures of the world. You must not allow yourself in sensuality, or worldliness, or the pursuit of the enjoyments or honors of the world, or occupy your thoughts or time in heaping up the dust of the earth.

Second, you must, in your meditations and holy exercises, be much engaged in conversing with heavenly persons, and objects, and enjoyments. ... Commune much with God and Christ in prayer, and think often of all that is in heaven...

Third, be content to pass through all difficulties in the way to heaven. ... That glorious city of light and love is, as it were, on the top of a high hill or mountain, and there is no way to it but by upward and arduous steps. But though the ascent be difficult, and the way full of trials, still it is worth your while to meet them all for the sake of coming and dwelling in such a glorious city at last.

Fourth, in all your way let your eye be fixed on Jesus, who has gone to heaven as your forerunner. Look to him. Behold his glory in heaven, that a sight of it may stir you up the more earnestly to desire to be there.

Fifth, if you would be in the way to the world of love, see that you live a life of love — of love to God, and love to men. All of us hope to have part in the world of love hereafter, and therefore we should cherish the spirit of love, and live a life of holy love here on earth.

B. Christ's Promise

Revelation 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."

C. How Much Heaven Do You Want?

Edwards's Resolution #22: Resolved, to endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness, in the other world, as I possibly can, with all the power, might, vigor, and vehemence, yea violence, I am capable of, or can bring myself to exert, in any way that can be thought of.

“How Much Land Does a Man Need” (Leo Tolstoy, 1886)