*Principles of Prophecy: A Study of Our Future Hope*

Justice, Judgment, and Eternal Rewards

Lesson 9 – October 27, 2013

**Focus Thought**

The Lord is faithful to reward those who believe.

**Focus Verse**

Hebrews 9:27

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

**Lesson Text**

Revelation 20:11-15

11 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.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:1-4

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

**Culture Connection**

Payday Someday

by Gary D. Erickson

The story is known as the “McDonald’s Coffee Case.” Stella Liebeck spilled a cup of McDonald’s coffee and suffered burns that required medical attention. For her misfortune, she was awarded by the court a settlement of $160,000 for medical expenses and $2.7 million in damages. On an appeal, the settlement amount was agreed upon out of court for an unspecified amount. This is an example of how our culture has become excessively litigious.

People sue others for frivolous infractions and often win large sums of money. In spite of a sophisticated and burgeoning legal system, there continue to be verdicts of blatant injustice. We read about wealthy people who hire powerful legal teams to help them manipulate the law to escape punishment. Too often justice is trampled upon. John F. Kennedy was correct when he said, “Life is unfair.” As a result, there is a longing within the human heart to correct this injustice. Humankind tries hard to correct the disparity, but life is full of unfair situations.

We are all born into different circumstances. Some are born into wealth, have talents and good health, while others may be born with a handicap, be poor, or lack natural abilities. We have to work with what we have and trust that someday justice will prevail.

The believer has hope in the providence of God: “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he” (Deuteronomy 32:4). Justice will one day be fully realized: “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

**Lesson Outline**

 **I. WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO DIES?**

 A. Old Testament Believers and Unbelievers

 B. New Testament Believers and Unbelievers

 **II. THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST**

 A. A Place of Honor

 B. A Place Where Motives Are Assessed

 **III. THE WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT**

 A. Bride of Christ Will Participate with Christ at the White Throne Judgment

 B. All Will Be Judged

 C. Eternal Rewards and Punishment

**Contemplating the Topic**

All who believe in an afterlife wonder what that existence will be like. Non-Christian religions offer a variety of interesting speculations, but even within Christianity popular ideas often lack biblical support. For example, we may hear the idea expressed that the departed have become angels who are now watching over us. In what is probably an attempt to lighten our grief, we may identify well-known characteristics of our departed loved ones and describe how they are probably exercising those characteristics in Heaven.

In comparison to the total content of Scripture, it is somewhat surprising how little the Holy Bible tells us about life after death. There is, however, enough to assure us that there is an afterlife, that all human beings will exist forever somewhere, and that the eternal destinies of people of faith and those who reject God are quite different.

Transparency 1 defines the intermediate state.

Scripture informs us not only about our final destiny but also about the intermediate state, the time between our death and our resurrection from the dead. We have enough information to know that people are conscious during this time, with the saved enjoying the presence of the Lord and the lost suffering a painful existence.

**Searching the Scriptures**

**I. WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO DIES?**

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word sheol, often translated “hell” in the KJV, is the place to which the dead go. In the New Testament, the Greek counterpart is hades. As with all words, it is important to remember that these words are defined by the context in which they are used. In some contexts, sheol and hades refer to death or, as a symbol of death, the grave. In other contexts, the words refer to the place of literal and conscious torment to which the unredeemed go after death. There is a great deal of confusion over this matter due to the fact that some individuals teach that the words sheol and hades must always have the same meaning. Typically, those who teach this insist that Hell is simply the grave and that there is no conscious place of suffering for the wicked after death.

**A. Old Testament Believers and Unbelievers**

When Reuben tried to persuade his father, Jacob, to allow Benjamin to accompany his brothers on a return trip to Egypt, Jacob said, “My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave” (Genesis 42:38). The word translated “grave” is sheol. Here, Jacob used sheol as a reference to death itself. The grave symbolizes death.

Job’s wish for death is expressed in his words, “O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!” (Job 14:13).

In the case of both Reuben and Job, it is clear that sheol is simply a reference to death, not to a place of conscious torment. Job would have had no desire to go to a place of torment. That certainly would not have been an escape from the painful circumstances he faced on earth.

When it seemed to Heman the Ezrahite that death loomed near, he wrote, “For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave” (Psalm 88:3). For Heman, sheol was death itself. The parallelism of Hebrew poetry indicates that Heman equated sheol with “the pit,” another word for the grave: “I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength” (Psalm 88:4). “Pit” is translated from the Hebrew bowr.

In other contexts, sheol is used to describe the specific destiny of the wicked: “The wicked shall be turned into hell [sheol], and all the nations that forget God” (Psalm 9:17). Since all people, righteous and wicked, will die, sheol in this case has a more restrictive meaning.

In a description first of the fall of the king of Babylon, then of Lucifer himself, Isaiah described sheol as a place of conscious suffering in a community of suffers where communication between individuals occurs.

*“Hell [sheol] from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave [sheol] . . . . They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?” (Isaiah 14:9-11, 16-17).*

In this context, where sheol is used to describe not simply the grave as the destiny of the body, but the destiny of the spirit and soul, a completely different Hebrew word, qeber, is used to describe the grave itself.

In a lament over Pharaoh and Egypt, sheol describes the destiny of those destroyed as a place of consciousness: “The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell [sheol] with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword” (Ezekiel 32:21). Here again, when sheol refers to something other than the grave, qeber is used to refer to the grave itself: “Asshur is there and all her company: his graves are about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword” (Ezekiel 32:22).

Jonah used sheol to describe his experience in the fish’s belly: “And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice” (Jonah 2:2). If sheol referred only to the grave, it would have been inappropriate for Jonah to describe his experience with this word. And if the idea of sheol excludes consciousness, the word would have been inappropriate, for Jonah was conscious and praying. But Jonah could use sheol in a poetic sense, for the belly of the fish was to him what sheol must seem to be to those who are there.

The New Testament says much more about the resurrection of the dead than does the Old Testament. There are allusions to the resurrection here and there (see, e.g., Job 19:26), but a clear statement appears in the Book of Daniel.

*“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2).*

**B. New Testament Believers and Unbelievers**

In the New Testament, hades is used in the same way sheol is in the Old Testament. The word sometimes describes the condition of the lost between death and the resurrection, and it sometimes describes the condition of the saved.

In I Corinthians 15:54-55, Paul equated death and hades:

*“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 [hades], where is thy victory?”*

Paul quoted here from the Septuagint translation of Hosea 13:14, a poetic passage in which, as is the case with Hebrew poetry, the rhyme is not one of sound, but of thought. In this sense, hades “rhymes” with death; it is a restatement of the same idea in a different word. As used by Paul, it is the righteous who have experienced and are delivered both from “death” and hades. In this context, then, hades cannot refer to the abode of the wicked dead.

Peter’s quote from the Septuagint version of Psalm 16:8-11 on the Day of Pentecost also demonstrates that sheol and hades may refer to the condition of the righteous dead. To explain that David prophesied of the resurrection of Jesus, that He would be loosed from “the pains of death” (Acts 2:24), Peter said,

*“For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [hades], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:25-27).*

Peter reiterated David’s prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus:

*“He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [hades], neither his flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:31).*

The flesh of Jesus was in the grave, but His soul—His immaterial part—was in hades until His resurrection. Since Jesus was not wicked, He did not suffer the fate of the wicked dead. In this case, hades is the same place as paradise, for Jesus said to the thief on the cross, “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).

But the New Testament also uses hades to refer to the condition of the unsaved after death. To the unbelievers in Capernaum, Jesus said, “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell [hades]: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day” (Matthew 11:23).

In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus said of the rich man, “And in hell [hades] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom” (Luke 16:23).

The more common Greek word for the condition of the unsaved dead is gehenna, which seems always to refer to a condition of fiery torment. For example, Jesus said,

*“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell [gehenna] fire” (Matthew 5:22).*

According to a twelfth-century Jewish scholar, David Kimchi, gehenna was the word used to describe a garbage dump in the valley of Hinnom outside of the city of Jerusalem in the first century. A fire was kept continually burning to consume this refuse. Thus gehenna became a metaphor for the condition of the unrighteous dead. More than that should not be read into it, however. Doctrines cannot be based on metaphors. The fact that the fires in the valley of Hinnom consumed the refuse cannot be taken to imply that the wicked dead are consumed and cease to exist. Our understanding of the eternal condition of the wicked dead must be taken from passages of Scripture which specifically address that subject, and those passages indicate that the wicked dead are not annihilated. (See Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 14:11.) Human beings are not merely material beings; they are also immaterial beings which will never cease to exist. Jesus said that at the judgment of the Gentiles upon His return,

*“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: . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:41, 46).*

The same Greek word (aiōnion) is translated both “everlasting” and “eternal” in Matthew 25:46. If the life is eternal, so is the punishment, and Jesus described this “everlasting punishment” as “everlasting fire.”

The intermediate state of the righteous dead—the time between their death and the resurrection—is further developed in the New Testament. In an apparent reference to himself in the third person, Paul wrote,

*“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)” (II Corinthians 12:2-3).*

If Paul was “in the body,” he was still alive and his experience was a vision. If he was “out of the body,” he was dead, and his experience was that of a righteous person who has died.

*“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him” (II Corinthians 5:6-9).*

Elsewhere, Paul indicated that he experienced “deaths oft” (II Corinthians 11:23). But for our purposes, it does not matter whether Paul’s experience was a vision or something that occurred while he was dead. If there is no consciousness after death until the resurrection, Paul would have known that his experience was “in the body.” In that case it could not have been “out of the body.” Paul’s uncertainty is in this case proof that he believed there is consciousness in paradise; he heard “unspeakable words” (II Corinthians 12:4).

Transparency 2 quotes portions of II Corinthians 5:8 and Philippians 1:23-24.

According to Paul, “to be absent from the body” is “to be present with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:8). To die is “to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” than remaining “in the flesh” (Philippians 1:23-24).

On the cross, Jesus said to the believing thief, “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). These words imply that the thief would that very day enjoy some kind of conscious fellowship with Jesus in paradise. If there is no consciousness after death, it is difficult to see the value of this promise. What kind of paradise would it be if we knew nothing?

John also indicated that the dead are conscious prior to the resurrection. He wrote,

*“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (Revelation 6:9-11).*

Here, those who are martyred during the Great Tribulation (see Revelation 7:14) are in Heaven in the presence of God, conscious, and able to communicate.

A clear account of the state of the righteous and unrighteous dead is found in the story Jesus told of the rich man and Lazarus. (See Luke 16:19-21.) Some have argued that this account is a parable and that its description of the condition of the dead cannot therefore be trusted. Those who take this view typically reinterpret the story so that it has nothing to do with the state of the dead. But even if it were a parable, we can be sure that Jesus would not misrepresent the state of the dead. In other words, the description Jesus gave of the state of the dead would have been accurate, even if the account were parabolic.

In no parable did Jesus mislead His hearers by inaccurate representations. For events commonly occurring in real life to accurately represent spiritual realities, the real life events must be accurately presented. But the notion that this is a parable is made unlikely in view of the fact that in no parable did Jesus name actual people. In this account, we have Abraham, a historic figure, and Lazarus identified by name. That Jesus named these people and quoted Abraham’s words indicates this is an event that actually occurred. Otherwise, Jesus put words in Abraham’s mouth that he never spoke.

Upon Lazarus’s death, Jesus said that he was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. (See Luke 16:22.) “Abraham’s bosom” was a common Jewish metaphor for the blessed state of the righteous dead. Those who died in faith had joined Abraham—the father of the faithful—in the afterlife. After the resurrection of Jesus, Christians no longer spoke of the state of the righteous dead as “Abraham’s bosom.” This term was eclipsed due to the resurrection of the greatest Son of Abraham. The death of the righteous is now seen as being in the presence of Christ rather than Abraham.

Concerning the story of the rich man and Lazarus, those who reject the reliability of this account as it pertains to the state of the dead typically point out that in the afterlife we do not have fingers or tongues which can be cooled by a drop of water. But it must be admitted that we do not know how to describe the post-death, pre-resurrection existence. In Revelation, John was able to see the souls of the dead so as to identify them as people, and these souls were able to think and talk. They were also able to rest and to wear white robes, which we know represents the righteousness of the saints. (See Revelation 19:8.)

But it would be wrong to allow what we do not know about the afterlife to distract us from the clear teaching of Jesus that the righteous dead enjoy fellowship with believers who have died before them and that the wicked dead experience suffering and remorse.

**II. THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST**

The judgment seat of Christ is to be distinguished from the White Throne Judgment. Only the saved appear at the judgment seat of Christ, if “the day” of I Corinthians 3:13 is the same event as that described in II Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10. It seems certain this is so, for each text speaks of a judgment of believers that will evaluate what they have done on earth.

**A. A Place of Honor**

There is the potential of honor at the judgment seat of Christ, for it is the place where “every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10). But there is also, as this verse indicates, the possibility of loss. It may seem strange to think of saved people who have done “bad,” but if the issue has to do with our motives, as may be suggested in I Corinthians 3:12-15, we would have to admit that none of us have completely pure motives for all we do, even though our motives may be pure for other things we do.

**B. A Place Where Motives Are Assessed**

The most complete insight on the judgment seat of Christ seems to be expressed in I Corinthians 3:12-15.

*“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”*

Transparency 3 quotes a portion of I Corinthians 3:13-14.

The works evaluated at this judgment fall into two distinct categories. Those works that will not perish in fire are gold, silver, and precious stones; those works that will perish are wood, hay, and stubble. What distinguishes between imperishable and perishable works? Since the element of reward is mentioned, our attention is drawn to Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:1-6. Jesus said that giving, praying, and fasting should not be done to be seen of men. If that is one’s motive, human approval is the only reward that will ever be received. But if one does these things unto the Lord, not seeking human approval or acknowledgement, an open reward will be given by God.

Jesus did not say that those who give, pray, and fast to be seen of men would be lost for this; He said they would receive no reward from God. Likewise, in I Corinthians 3:13-15, Paul did not say that those whose work falls into the perishable category will be lost. They will “suffer loss,” but they “shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” On the other hand, those whose work does not perish will “receive a reward.”

**III. THE WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT**

The White Throne Judgment, which occurs after the Millennium, is for all who have not been previously resurrected. This includes the wicked dead of the Old Testament era, those who are not caught up to meet the Lord at the rapture of the church, and all who are born after the Rapture. This does not mean that all who are born after the Rapture will be cast into the lake of fire. (See Revelation 20:11-15.) Although the church age will be over after the rapture of the church, there will be people who will turn to Christ during the Great Tribulation and the Millennium (Revelation 7:14; 20:4).

**A. Bride of Christ Will Participate with Christ at the White Throne Judgment**

In a rebuke to the church at Corinth due to their tendency to seek secular solutions to problems that should be resolved within the church, Paul wrote,

*“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” (I Corinthians 6:2).*

This reference to judging “the world” may be a reference to the church sharing in some way with Christ in the final work of judgment that begins with the Millennium. John wrote, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them” (Revelation 20:4). A profound indication that this is so is found in Jesus’ words to the church in Thyatira:

*“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father” (Revelation 2:26-27; see also Revelation 1:6; 5:10.)*

The saints’ share in this messianic promise first found in Psalm 2:9 shows the significance of their post-resurrection destiny. They have not become angels; instead, they will be involved in judging angels: “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (I Corinthians 6:3).

**B. All Will Be Judged**

The final judgment comes after the Millennium, at the end of which Satan is loosed from the bottomless pit and makes one last desperate act of rebellion against God. (See Revelation 20:7-9.) As always, his effort fails and “the devil . . . was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

At this point in his vision, John 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” (Revelation 20:11). All those who had not yet been resurrected were raised from the dead at this point, and they were judged according to their works. This judgment is conducted by the opening of books that apparently contain a record of each person’s deeds. Another book, the Book of Life, is also consulted to see whose names are written therein. Then, death and Hell were cast into the lake of fire, signifying the end of both. This act is identified as “the second death.” Finally, “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

Since the Book of Revelation is rich with symbolism, we should not be surprised to find symbolism here. (See lesson 8.) But the fact that symbolism is used to communicate the meaning of John’s vision does not strip the words of the literal significance found in them. Literal meaning is carried by symbolism wherever it is found in Scripture. This description of the White Throne Judgment means that, however it is carried out, every person who has ever lived has an eternal destiny that will be determined by the life each has lived on this earth.

**C. Eternal Rewards and Punishment**

There is no indication that every person who stands before God at this final judgment will be cast into the lake of fire. Scripture tells us only that those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will experience this eternal destiny whose horror is beyond description. We must remember that by this point in history, long after the rapture of the church, there is no doubt that multiplied millions of people have been born and died for whom this judgment is their first. Surely many of them will have put their faith in Christ just as did the saints who came out of the Great Tribulation. (See Revelation 7:14.) This would be one of the “works” for which they were judged (Revelation 20:12-13). On the other hand, those who identified with Satan in his final rebellion will certainly share his destiny. (See Revelation 20:8-10.) It may be that this is the event anticipated in the following texts:

*“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2).*

*“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” (John 5:28-29).*

**Internalizing the Message**

It is important to remember as we read Scripture that words are defined by the context in which they are used. As it relates to life after death, the Hebrew sheol and the Greek hades refer to the condition of the unrighteous or righteous dead and refer to death itself, as represented by the grave, or to the afterlife, depending on their context.

The dead are conscious as they await the resurrection. The wicked dead suffer the pain caused by their rejection of Jesus Christ. The righteous dead enjoy fellowship with Christ in paradise.

The idea that the dead are unconscious springs from the notion that human consciousness is merely a physical phenomenon occurring in the brain. But according to Scripture, consciousness is not a function of only our material part. People are spirit beings, and consciousness is a function of the spirit. (See Hebrews 4:12; I Thessalonians 5:23.) God is Spirit and was a conscious Being even before the Incarnation. (See John 4:24.) Angels are spirits and conscious. (See Hebrews 1:7.) Although the human spirit apparently makes use of the human brain in its conscious functions as they pertain to life on planet earth, consciousness in the afterlife is possible apart from the human brain.

But the intermediate state is not our final destiny. All will eventually be resurrected to an eternal existence determined by the choices they made during their lifetimes on earth.

**Reflections**

• Explain how sheol and hades can be used to refer to the intermediate state of both the righteous and unrighteous.

• What biblical examples can you give to illustrate that people are not unconscious after they die?

• How is it that a person at the judgment seat of Christ can suffer loss and yet be saved?

• What determines whether one’s works are in the category of gold, silver, and precious stones or of wood, hay, and stubble?

• Who will stand before God at the White Throne Judgment?