

Too Hot to Handle

*How God's Word Addresses
Difficult Subjects*

(Live-streamed @ gdlc.tv)

Pastor Joe Meyer

“Renewed or Brand New?”

What will happen to the heavens/earth at the Second Coming?

Discuss

Take a moment to discuss what you have heard or read or learned about what will happen at the Second Coming. What have you heard concerning what will happen to the earth, to our bodies, etc.?

If you could describe what you think heaven is like, how would you describe it? How does your “hoped for heaven” shape what you think the Bible says about heaven?

Discover

Let’s dig into the Bible by first remembering the fact of the Second Coming. In other words, regardless of what we think about the events surrounding the Second Coming, let’s simply begin by remembering that it will happen. Look at Jesus’ words in **Matthew 24:15-35**. Pick out three major things that impact you from what Jesus says about the Second Coming. Write them in the space below and comment on why those are important to you/to the Church.

Now consider what the Lord wrote through the Apostle Peter in **2 Peter 3:1-10**. Notice that Peter re-iterates for us the fact of the Second Coming, but he also reminds us that it will happen when we do not expect it. Compare Peter's words in **2 Peter 3** to what Paul writes in **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**. That truth then takes us back to **Matthew 24:36-44** this time. Consider this though: Will the Second Coming be a complete surprise? Why or why not?

Matthew 24:36-44 brings something else up in the words of Jesus that read: ***“For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.”*** **Matthew 24:38-42**. So... what is the Lord Jesus talking about here? Who is taken and who is left? Is the Christian taken and the non-Christian left? Or is it the other way around? Once you've discussed that, consider Paul's words about the Second Coming in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**. In that segment, who is “taken” and who is “left”? After thinking through the implications of that passage, read **2 Peter 3:7** and **1 Thessalonians 5:3** again. When you let Scripture interpret Scripture, what does it sound like will happen to Christians versus the non-Christians at the Second Coming?

Now, to the point of our study for today, what will happen, not just to the people of the heavens and earth, but to the heavens and the earth themselves? Go back to **Matthew 24:29-31** and compare the cosmic-cataclysmic activity to **Matthew 24:35** and **2 Peter 3:10-13**.

After discussing that, consider if **2 Peter 3:13** is speaking of a renewed-current-creation, or a separate place that is a new heaven and earth for us known as “heaven.” Compare that verse to the others that speak about “new heavens/new earth”: **Isaiah 65:17-25** and **Revelation 21:1-4**.

Okay, now let’s consider two passages that are very important in understanding what will happen at the Second Coming. First, look at **2 Corinthians 5:1-10**. How does Paul describe being in the presence of the Lord at our death? How is that helpful to our discussion? Now, look at one of the most famous things that Jesus said in the Gospels, but one that is famous for another reason, other than our study-focus for today...read and consider: **John 14:1-6**. Letting those words speak for themselves, does it sound as if we’re staying on the earth after the Second Coming?

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“Who Owns You?”

*Understanding What God Thinks about
Abortion/Euthanasia/Suicide*

Discuss

Do you struggle, when voting for public officials, to balance your political views with your faith convictions? Are there things other than abortion that have given you heartburn as you vote for this or that politician?

What do we need to be sensitive about when talking about abortion with people, both Christian and non-Christian friends, family, co-workers? As you have had conversations, what have you found important to consider when talking about our Bible-based pro-life stance?

Discover

While many believe that abortion/euthanasia are only political issues, they are not. What we are studying today is a biblical, faith-based, God’s-will issue, from start to finish. Let’s begin our discovery session at that point then. Let’s first talk about an important theology: “The Kingdom of the Right Hand vs. the Kingdom of the Left Hand.” What does that mean?

“The Kingdom of the Right Hand” belongs to God and is His rule through the church and in and through the Gospel. Look at the language of the overly familiar “Great Commission” found in **Matthew 28:16-20**.

“The Kingdom of the Left Hand” belongs to God and is His rule through the government and in and through law. Look at **Romans 13:1-7**.

Notice though...God rules both. There is no separation of Church and State. In fact, the “separation of church and state” is actually titled...what? Why is that important in understanding its limitations? But God owns/runs/rules both the Church and the Government...why is it important to make this distinction and yet also make this connection? What does it have to do with issues like abortion/euthanasia? How does it speak to your responsibility in regards to our government, particularly given the Republic/Democracy we live in? In this light, consider the Church’s response to Nazi Germany...or lack thereof.

Besides the “Two Kingdom” theology then, what else governs how we look at issues of life? Consider Luther’s Catechism and the how the 5th Commandment (Exodus 20) actually reads:

The Fifth Commandment: You shall not murder.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

How does the 5th Commandment and Luther's definition inform the subject? It seems evident that abortion fits the "You will not murder" definition...what about assisted suicide or suicide period? After you consider that, look at **Psalm 139:13-16**.

Now, I'd finally like you to think about something: How do you feel about the primary "villain" in these two biblical stories: **Exodus 1:15-22; Matthew 2:1-18**. As you consider the "villains" in these two stories, what makes them any different from those who purport abortion/euthanasia to be acceptable? Is there a difference? If so, what?

One last set of verses to consider in this regard...for you as a Christian: **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**.

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“Is Love...Really Love?”

Can I really do whatever I want to with “my” body?

Discuss

It is sometimes said that the Church hates people that are gay? Why do you think people say that? How does that sentiment or misunderstanding impact our preaching/teaching?

Presuming you’ve heard sermons/Bible studies about homosexuality, or even sexuality in general, have you struggled with what was said...even if it was Biblical?

Discover

One of the greatest struggles that we have as Christians is that we believe the Bible to be “absolute truth” in a world that rejects “absolute truth.” In that regard, let’s look at **John 17:17**. What does that mean and how does it impact how we communicate with our friends and family members about our faith?

Before we talk about the subject for today, I want to remind you of the purpose, the primary purpose that is, of God’s Word. Look at **Romans 10:17**.

But God's Word also gives us direction for our lives and part of the direction God's Word gives us centers in our sexuality. It teaches how we are to deal with one of the most significant and beautiful gifts that the Lord has given us. In order to understand the import of this subject to our Lord, let me ask you this question: "Is every sin the same in God's eyes?" Most Christians will answer "Yes...a sin is a sin." The Lord doesn't answer that way however. Check **1 Corinthians 6:9-20** and note that the Lord puts a premium on sexual sins. Why though? According to Paul there, what's the issue with a Christian joining themselves in sexually inappropriate ways? In case you're saying "It's my body...I can do with it whatever I want to..." let me remind you of verses 19b-20 in the 1 Corinthians reading above. Who do you belong to? You? In fact, one last passage in that regard: **Matthew 16:24-28**.

Okay then, what are those sexually inappropriate ways? Let's talk about just two...first dealing with what I consider to be a major problem in the Christian Church today, namely, living together before marriage and/or having sex before marriage. Check first Christ's discussion with the woman at the well in **John 4**. Does Jesus seem to think that living together is okay? Then consider **Hebrews 13:4**. Genuinely, what is the problem with having sex before marriage?

What about homosexuality then? Is homosexuality any different then from sexual immorality of other kinds? Some would say “Yes it’s different!” and they would so because they believe that a person who is a homosexual did not choose to be a homosexual but was born one, thereby God created and ordained their homosexual lifestyle. Why is it possible that this is both a true statement and a false one all at the same time? In other words, is it possible to be “born” homosexual? But if so, did God make it happen? After discussion then consider **Mark 10:1-9** and alongside that passage, consider **Leviticus 18:22** and **Romans 1:18-27**.

So, can you be homosexual in orientation and still be a Christian? Talk that out first and then consider **1 Timothy 1:8-11** and **Hebrews 10:26**. In the First Timothy passage Paul writes “...those who _____ homosexuality.” Why is that important to our discussion? Let me ask this: Are there sins that you struggle with and yet can still consider yourself a Christian?

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“Loving Jesus and Living in the USA”

*Where is my citizenship and what does that mean for
my life in the U.S.A.?*

Discuss

Do you believe that we live in a “Christian Nation”? Why or why not? And if so, what does America being a “Christian Nation” mean to you?

Do you believe our forefathers and foremothers intended us to be a Christian Nation?

Do you believe the Lord intended us to be a Christian Nation?

Discover

Read **Psalm 33:11-22**. Often, verse twelve is quoted as either a “hoped for outcome” for the United States...more often it’s quoted to explain why the U.S. has been so blessed...in other words, this nation’s God is the Lord of the Bible. What statement in Psalm 33 denies that possibility?

So, the Psalmist writes of “chosen-ness” in verse twelve and that is a specific chosen nation/status. Where else is the idea of chosenness found? Check **Deuteronomy 7:6-8**. Who then is “the nation whose God is the Lord” in the Old Testament? Why is that important?

Okay then, in what way does the New Testament use that terminology? Check **Colossians 3:12-17** and **1 Peter 2:9-10**. Notice that now, all Christians are “the chosen” in Christ and through Christ and by Christ.

Furthermore, you are not only a Christian, you are now part and parcel of the faith of Israel and more than that, you are grafted into the people of Israel as well. That means you are now, as a chosen-Christian person, part of the Old Testament, faith-driven, chosen-race. Read **Romans 11:11-24**.

What that means is that your primary citizenship is not the United States of America. Your primary citizenship is in fact your loyalty, subjection, and obedience is not to the U.S. but to the King of kings and Lord of lords in and through the Church. Consider then **Acts 5:27-29; Colossians 3:1-4; Philippians 3:17-21**.

Now, remember that the government, the Kingdom of the Left Hand as we studied before, remains the Lord's and is given to us for our good. See **Romans 13:1-7**. That means we must still obey them, as long as they do not violate God's law/ways...but our primary citizenship is not in or to the U.S.A. In other words, you can't say "I'm not paying taxes (etc.) because the Bible says I'm a citizen of heaven." That doesn't fly.

We are also to be reminded that we are to be a force for change, betterment and strengthening by our citizenship here in the U.S. Consider what **Matthew 5:13-16** means in regards to our citizenship in the U.S.

One last thought then...what about immigration? As Christians, how should we view immigration into our country? Let me first remind you of the **Romans 13** passage above; remind you also of the Two Kingdom Theory; and yet finally remind you of what God has done for us and therefore what we are to be doing for others: **Exodus 22:21-24**.

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