

HEAVEN is A WORLD of LOVE JONATHAN EDWARDS

DISCOVER ETERNITY



BE UNITED
IN CHRIST

HEAVEN IS A WORLD OF LOVE

Heaven Is a World of Love: Discover Eternity
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HEAVEN, UNITY, LOVE, AND ETERNITY

Heaven and Unity

Why would a ministry devoted to Christian unity publish Jonathan Edwards' most powerful sermons on Heaven and Hell? Because Heaven is a world of loving union, Hell is a place of hateful conflict, and the solidarity of Christ's disciples is an important element in persuading unbelievers to spend eternity experiencing the love of God in Heaven rather than the wrath of God in Hell.

As Jonathan Edwards notes, since Heaven is the dwelling place of God, and God is love, Heaven is a world of love. Heaven is where God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit live forever in loving unity. Heaven is also where those who have embraced Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are united with God and with one another in perfect, unending love. Loving unity is what makes Heaven heavenly.

This union of believers with God and one another is precisely what Jesus prayed for His disciples.

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known

Heaven, Unity, Love, and Eternity

You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17 20–26)

Jesus wants His disciples to enjoy the same loving union with the Father that He does. He prayed for them to be united on earth in anticipation of uniting them in Heaven. Visible Christian unity also attracts other sinners to embrace Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Christian love is an essential element in proclaiming the gospel, and loving union with God and others is the ultimate goal of the gospel.

Heaven and Love

Every one of us will die, stand before God as our judge, and then be sent to Heaven or Hell for all eternity. The two most important questions we can ask are: what must we do to inherit eternal life, and which of God’s commandments is most important for us to obey? Jesus answered both of these critical questions identically: love God and love others.

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” So he answered and said, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’” And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” (Luke 10:25–28)

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with

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**JONATHAN EDWARDS
ON HEAVEN AND HELL**

Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards was born October 5, 1703, in East Windsor, Connecticut. His mother, Esther, was the daughter of a prominent New England pastor, and his father, Timothy, was the pastor of a church in East Windsor for sixty-three years. Jonathan was their fifth child and the only son among ten daughters. Jonathan and his wife, Sarah, would later have eleven children of their own.

Jonathan earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Yale College. His conversion occurred while he was home from graduate studies in the summer of 1721. As Edwards recalled:

The first instance that I remember of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen” (1 Timothy 1:17). As I read the words, there came into my soul and was, as it were, diffused through it a sense of the glory of the Divine Being—a new sense, quite different from anything I ever experienced before. Never had any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought to myself: how excellent a Being that was and how happy I should be if I might enjoy that God and be caught up to Him in Heaven and be, as it were, swallowed up in Him forever!¹

From then on, Edwards understood and experienced God in richer, more heartfelt ways, and his esteem and adoration of the beauty and glory of God became hallmarks of his ministry.

¹ Sereno E. Dwight, “Memoirs of Jonathan Edwards,” in vol. 1 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Edward Hickman (London: William Ball, 1839), lv.

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ETERNITY: A LONG FOREVER

There is another life that follows your short life on earth, and this life to come lasts forever. The afterlife is everlasting. On Judgment Day, Christ will sentence the wicked to everlasting punishment in Hell, but the righteous will enter everlasting joy in Heaven (Matthew 25:46). His judgment will be final, and there will be no appeal or parole. Therefore, what makes Heaven heavenly and Hell hellish is not just the joy or torment that people experience in these two real places but also the endless time they enjoy or endure it. After this life you will either live in Heaven or Hell for all eternity.

Here is Edwards' description from "Heaven Is a World of Love" of the endless joys that those in Heaven will enjoy forever:

The saints in Heaven will know that God and Christ will be forever with them as their God and inheritance and that His love will continue and be fully known forever. They will know that all their beloved fellow saints will forever live with them in glory and will forever keep up the same love in their hearts which they now have. And they will know that they themselves will ever live to love God and the saints and to enjoy their love in all its fullness and sweetness forever.

They will not fear an end to this happiness or any lessening of its fullness and blessedness. They will not worry that they will ever grow weary of its exercises and expressions or become tired of its pleasures. There will be no concern that the persons and things that are loved will ever grow old or disagreeable so that their own love for them will at last die away. . . . Everything in the heavenly world will contribute to the joy of the saints, and every joy of Heaven will be everlasting. No night will settle down with its darkness upon the brightness of their everlasting day.

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HEAVEN IS A WORLD OF LOVE

BACKGROUND | OUTLINE | SUMMARY | SERMON

Background

“Heaven Is a World of Love” is the final sermon in a fifteen-part series on 1 Corinthians 13:1–10. Jonathan Edwards preached these messages between April and October of 1738, and the collection was first published in 1852 under the title *Charity and Its Fruits: Christian Love As Manifested in the Heart and Life*.³

One sad source of contention was disagreement over the seating arrangements for the new church being constructed. So Edwards preached fifteen messages on love to shepherd his bickering flock back to loving unity.

Jonathan Edwards selected the apostle Paul’s famous chapter on love to promote unity within a community that was struggling with dissension just three years after experiencing revival. One sad source of contention was disagreement over the seating arrangements for the new church being constructed. So Edwards preached fifteen messages on love to shepherd his bickering flock back to loving unity.

³ Quotations in this summary are taken from the public domain text: Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits*, ed. Tryon Edwards (New York, NY: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1854). A print version of this text is available from the Banner of Truth Trust. The standard edition of this sermon series is contained in Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, vol. 8 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

Heaven Is a World of Love

The theme of 1 Corinthians 13 is the superiority of love over all other gifts of the Holy Spirit. Edwards explains that Paul develops this theme in three parts. Verses 1–3 assert that love “is the most essential thing, and that all other gifts are nothing without it.” Verses 4–7 indicate how love is the source from which “all good disposition and behavior arise.” Verses 8–10 then declare that love “is the most durable of all gifts and shall remain when the church of God shall be in its most perfect state.” So, love is the greatest of the Spirit’s gifts because it is the essential, enduring source of all good thoughts, words, and actions. Love will remain when other gifts like tongues and prophecy cease and when other virtues like faith and hope are fulfilled (verses 8–13).⁴

As was customary for Puritan preachers, Edwards divides the final sermon in his series into three main parts: Bible text, doctrine, and application. His Bible text is 1 Corinthians 13:8–10. The doctrine he draws from this is “Heaven is a world of love.” He makes four applications to help God’s people walk along the path of pursuing Heaven. Though the journey will be long and hard, “Happy, thrice happy are those who will thus be found faithful to the end and will then be welcomed into the joy of their Lord.”

⁴ Edwards, 436 Edwards provides this outline of 1 Corinthians 13 in the sermon preceding “Heaven Is a World of Love.”

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Summary of the Sermon

Bible Text

Edwards' sermon text is 1 Corinthians 13:8–10: ⁸ Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

In his previous sermon on 1 Corinthians 13:8, Edwards concluded that “the way in which the Holy Spirit will be imparted to Christ’s church, not only for a season but also eternally, is the great fruit of divine love.” He now makes two additional observations that connect verse 8 with verses 9–10. First, verse 8 indicates that love is supreme among the Spirit’s works because “it will remain when all the other fruits of the Spirit have faded away.” Second, verse 10 reveals that the church will fully enjoy this fruit of the Spirit in Heaven, for “there the Spirit of God will be poured forth and revealed in perfect love in every heart for all eternity.” Before Edwards focuses on the love that will prevail forever in Heaven, he comments briefly on what the “perfect” is, when it will come, and why in Heaven every spiritual gift other than love will “fail,” “cease,” and “vanish away” (1 Corinthians 13:8–10).

Edwards indicates that the church develops in four stages: the age of the apostles, the period after the apostles but before the return of Christ, the time when Christ reigns on earth, and finally when the entire church is present with God in Heaven. For the first two periods, the church is “imperfect” in the sense of being incomplete and still in development.

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Key Sermon Quotations

“There in Heaven dwells the God from whom every stream of holy love proceeds—yes, every drop that is or ever was. There dwells God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, united as one in infinitely precious, incomprehensible, mutual, and eternal love.”

“That blessed world will be perfectly bright without any darkness, perfectly fair without any spot, perfectly clear without any cloud. No moral or physical defect will ever intrude there. Nothing will be sinful, weak, or foolish. Nothing will be coarse or displeasing that can offend even the most refined taste or the most discerning eye. No string will vibrate out of tune to disrupt the harmony of Heaven’s music. No note will be sung off-key to detract from the anthems of the saints and angels.”

“In Heaven will be the days-old infant that we lost below only to find above through grace. There will be our Christian fathers, mothers, wives, children, and friends. We will renew the holy fellowship of the saints that was interrupted by death here. This will begin anew in the upper sanctuary and then will never end.”

“Christ loves all His saints in Heaven. There His love flows out both to the church as a whole and to every individual member of it.”

“There is not a heart there that is not full of love and not a single inhabitant who is not beloved by all the others. And because everyone is lovely, they all see each other’s loveliness with full pleasure and delight. Every soul reaches out in love to every other, and among all the blessed inhabitants of Heaven love is mutual, full, and eternal.”

“No inhabitants of that blessed world will ever be grieved with the thought that they are slighted by those whom they love, or that their love is not fully and fondly returned.”

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Key Bible Passages (NASB)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” **(John 3:16)**

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” **(John 13:34–35)**

“In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” **(John 14:2–3)**

“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” **(John 17:24)**

“Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” **(Romans 13:10)**

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.” **(1 Corinthians 13:1–3)**

“Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.” **(1 Corinthians 13:8–10)**

Original Sermon in Modern Language

Bible Text

⁸ Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. (1 Corinthians 13:8–10)

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

In my previous sermon on 1 Corinthians 13:8, I showed that the way in which the Holy Spirit will be imparted to Christ's church, not only for a season but also eternally, is the great fruit of divine love. Now I would like to consider verse 8 in connection with verses 9–10, and from these three verses I make two observations: First, one of love's great virtues is that it will remain when all the other fruits of the Spirit have faded away. Second, this will come about in the final state of the church, when "that which is in part will be done away" and "that which is perfect has come."

There are two imperfect and therefore two perfect states of the Christian church. The church's first imperfect or incomplete stage was in its beginning before it was strongly established in the world, settled into its New Testament condition, and before the canon of Scripture was completed. At this time the church was in a state of childhood, so to speak, in comparison to what it will be in its older and later ages when it shall reach its state of maturity, or comparatively earthly perfection.⁸ Likewise, this comparatively perfect church of Christ, as long as it remains at war with sin and Satan, will still be in an imperfect, and, as it were, in a childish state in comparison with what it will be in its heavenly state, at which time it will be in its state of manhood or perfection.

And so there is a twofold fading away of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit mentioned here in 1 Corinthians 13:8–10. One was at the end of the first or infant age of the church, when the canon of Scripture was completed, and therefore there was to be no need for such gifts in the church in its later ages. It was time for the church to put away childish things and enter a state of maturity before the end of the world, and it was time for the Spirit of God to be poured out and displayed most gloriously in that love which is its greatest and everlasting fruit. The other [phase in which some gifts of the Spirit fade away] is when all the common fruits of the Spirit cease. This occurs with respect to particular persons when they die, and it happens with respect to the whole church at the end of the world. But love still remains in Heaven, and there the Spirit of God will be poured forth and revealed in perfect love in every heart for all eternity.

⁸ The later ages “refers to a first ‘maturity’ of the church in the coming reign of Christ on earth [that is, the millennium]” (Ramsey, 36 footnote 3).

In context, Paul seems to be writing with respect to both these perfect or mature states of the church but especially the church at the end of the world. The glorious state of the church in its last age on earth will indeed be perfect in comparison with its earlier state. However, it is the church's state in Heaven that best agrees with the apostle when he says, "when that which is perfect has come," and "now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known" (1 Corinthians 13:10, 12).

Doctrine

The doctrine that I draw from 1 Corinthians 13:8–10 is: Heaven is a world of love.

The apostle Paul speaks in these verses of the church when it is perfect in Heaven. It will be a state in which the Holy Spirit will be more perfectly given to the church than He now is on earth. But the way He will be given, when He is so abundantly poured forth in Heaven, will be in producing holy and divine love within the hearts of all the blessed inhabitants of that world. This is what distinguishes the church's heavenly and earthly states. The heavenly state has been specially designed by God to communicate His Holy Spirit perfectly in this way, whereas in the present state of the church the Spirit is given incompletely. Moreover, in the heavenly state, this holy love will be the only gift or fruit of the Spirit, because love is the most perfect and glorious of all the Spirit's gifts and fruits. When love is brought to perfection, it makes all the other gifts that God typically gives to His church on earth unnecessary.

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SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD

[BACKGROUND](#) | [OUTLINE](#) | [SUMMARY](#) | [SERMON](#)

Background

Jonathan Edwards first preached “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” to his church in Northampton, Massachusetts, in June of 1741, but apparently to little effect.¹³ Then on July 8, Edwards preached his text again in Enfield, Connecticut, and the response this time was dramatically different. Edwards was part of a team of ministers invited to Enfield to prayerfully spark revival in this notoriously indifferent church. The future president of Dartmouth College, Eleazar Wheelock, participated in the event and remembered that at the beginning of the service the people were “thoughtless and vain” and “hardly conducted themselves with common decency.”¹⁴ It was thus into hardened soil that Edwards cast the seed of God’s Word.

Yet as he proclaimed what the Scriptures teach about the perilous position of unbelieving sinners, the crowd began to grasp and react to God’s truth. Edwards’ cousin and fellow minister Stephen Williams was also present at the time and recorded the audience’s remarkable response in his diary.

We went over to Enfield where we met dear Mr. Edwards of Northampton who preached a most awakening sermon from these words, Deuteronomy 32:35, and before the sermon

¹³ Harry S. Stout, “Edwards as Revivalist,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 139. A helpful resource for studying this sermon, its background, and its impact is Wilson H. Kinnach, Caleb J. D. Maskell, and Kenneth P. Minkema, eds., *Jonathan Edwards’s “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”: A Casebook* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

¹⁴ George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 220.

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

was done there was a great moaning and crying through the whole church—"What shall I do to be saved?" "Oh, I am going to Hell!" "Oh, what shall I do for Christ!"—so that the minister was obliged to stop. The shrieks and cries were piercing and amazing. After some time of waiting the people were still, so that a prayer was said by Mr. Wheelock, and after that we descended from the pulpit and spoke with the people, some in one place and some in another. And amazing and astonishing: the power of God was seen, and several souls were hopefully worked on that night, and oh, the cheerfulness and pleasantness of their faces that received comfort. Oh, that God would strengthen and confirm! We sang a hymn and prayed and dismissed the assembly.¹⁵

It is unknown how much of his message Edwards actually preached before the audience's outcries forced him to stop, but even the partial sermon was impactful enough to make history.

"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" does not so much detail the torments of Hell as describe the dire danger of the sinner's situation.¹⁶ Edwards' goal is to alert his listeners to their danger so that they turn to God for deliverance. At any moment, unsaved sinners might die and descend into Hell. As you read Edwards' sermon, please realize that the danger to sinners is real, that the offer of the gospel is open, and that your eternal destiny depends on how you respond.

¹⁵ Stephen Williams, *Diary of Reverend Stephen Williams*, vol. 3, July 8, 1711, Richard Salter Storrs Library (www.longmeadowlibrary.org/stephen-williams-diary-available-online), 19–19.

¹⁶ The half-title page of the first printed edition identified the message as "Mr. Edwards's Sermon on the Danger of the Unconverted" (Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1739–1742*, ed. Harry S. Stout, vol. 22 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003], 403).

Outline of the Sermon

Bible Text

“Their foot shall slip in due time.” (Deuteronomy 32:35)

Doctrine

Nothing keeps wicked men out of Hell at any given moment except the mere pleasure of God.

1. There is no lack of power in God to cast wicked men into Hell at any moment
2. Wicked men deserve to be cast into Hell
3. Wicked men are already under a sentence of condemnation to Hell
4. Wicked men are now the objects of the very same anger and wrath of God that are displayed in the torments of Hell
5. The devil stands ready to fall upon wicked men and seize them as his own at whatever moment God permits him
6. Hellish tendencies reign in the souls of wicked men, which, if not for God’s restraints, would quickly burst into hellish flames
7. The fact that there is no visible danger of death provides no security for wicked men

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Summary of the Sermon

Bible Text

Jonathan Edwards' sermon text is Moses' words to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 32:35: "Their foot shall slip in due time." This is one of four lines that actually make up this verse:

Vengeance is Mine, and recompense;
Their foot shall slip in due time;
For the day of their calamity is at hand,
And the things to come hasten upon them.

He then opens his sermon with a concise summary of the passage in its original context.

In this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked, unbelieving Israelites. They were God's visible people and enjoyed God's grace, but despite all the wonderful works that God had done for them, they remained "void of counsel" (Deuteronomy 32:28) and lacked understanding. Despite all of God's cultivating care, they brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit, as is indicated in verses 32–33.¹⁷

What Edwards' audience had in common with Moses' was that both were God's "visible people" but not necessarily His true people. There were many unbelievers sitting in the church pews, just as there were many unbelievers traveling with Israel. Both had experienced God's blessings but lacked a saving knowledge of God, and their lack of faith was revealed by their lack of fruit. As a result, they were both threatened with God's judgment, which could come at any moment.

¹⁷ "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom / And of the fields of Gomorrah; / Their grapes are grapes of gall, / Their clusters are bitter. / Their wine is the poison of serpents, / And the cruel venom of cobras" (Deuteronomy 32:32–33).

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Key Sermon Quotations

“There is nothing that keeps wicked men out of Hell at any given moment except the mere pleasure of God.”

“It is easy for God, when He pleases, to cast His enemies down to Hell. Who are we to stand before Him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles and before whom the rocks are thrown down?”

“The pit is prepared, the fire is ready, and the furnace is hot, ready to receive them. Even now the flames rage and glow. The glittering sword is sharpened and held over them, and the pit has opened its mouth underneath them.”

“Unconverted men walk over the pit of Hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen.”

“That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is spread out beneath you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God. There is Hell’s mouth open wide. And you have nothing to stand upon or anything to take hold of. There is nothing between you and Hell but the air. It is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.”

“There are the black clouds of God’s wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm and big with thunder. Were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you.”

“The floods of God’s vengeance have been withheld, but your guilt in the meantime is constantly increasing, and you are every day storing up more wrath (Romans 2:5). The waters are constantly rising and becoming more and more mighty.”

“The bow of God’s wrath is bent. The arrow is notched on the string. Justice aims the arrow at your heart and stretches the bow. And it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation whatsoever, that prevents the arrow from being made drunk with your blood this very moment.”

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Key Bible Passages (NASB)

“Vengeance is Mine, and retribution,
In due time their foot will slip;
For the day of their calamity is near,
And the impending things are hastening upon them.”
(Deuteronomy 32:35)

“Surely You set them in slippery places;
You cast them down to destruction.
How they are destroyed in a moment!
They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!”
(Psalm 73:18–19)

“Then they will go forth and look
On the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their worm will not die
And their fire will not be quenched;
And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind.”
(Isaiah 66:24)

“A jealous and avenging God is the LORD;
The LORD is avenging and wrathful.
The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries,
And He reserves wrath for His enemies.
The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,
And the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.
In whirlwind and storm is His way,
And clouds are the dust beneath His feet.” **(Nahum 1:2–3)**

“If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into Hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into Hell.” **(Matthew 5:29–30)**

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Original Sermon in Modern Language

Bible Text

“Their foot shall slip in due time.” (Deuteronomy 32:35)

In this verse the wicked, unbelieving Israelites are threatened with God’s vengeance. They were God’s visible people and enjoyed God’s grace, but despite all the wonderful works that God had done for them, they remained “void of counsel” (Deuteronomy 32:28) and lacked understanding.

Despite all of God’s cultivating care, they brought forth bitter

Their foot shall slip in due time.

and poisonous fruit, as is indicated in verses 32–33. The expression I have chosen for my text, “Their foot shall slip in due time,” seems to imply the following four things relating to the punishment and destruction to which these wicked Israelites were exposed.

1. They were always in danger of destruction, just as someone who stands or walks in slippery places is always in danger of falling. This is implied by the manner of their destruction coming upon them being compared to their foot slipping. The same comparison occurs in Psalm 73:18, “Surely You set them in slippery places; / You cast them down to destruction.”
2. It implies that they were always in danger of sudden, unexpected destruction. Someone who walks in slippery places is liable to fall at any time. He cannot foresee whether in the next moment he will stand or fall, and

when he does fall, he falls instantly and without warning. This also is expressed in Psalm 3: 18–19 “Surely You set them in slippery places; / You cast them down to destruction. / Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment!”

3. Another thing implied is that they were liable to fall by themselves, without being thrown down by someone else. A person who stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.
4. The only reason why they have not fallen already, and do not fall now, is only because God’s appointed time has not yet come. This is what it means when the text says, “Their foot shall slip in due time.” Then they will be allowed to fall naturally by their own weight. God will not hold them up in these slippery places any longer but will let them go. And then, at that very instant, they will fall into destruction. It is like a person who stands on slippery, sloping ground on the edge of a pit and who cannot stand by himself. When he is let go, he immediately falls and is lost.

Doctrine

The doctrinal conclusion that I draw from these words in Deuteronomy 32:35 is this: *There is nothing that keeps wicked men out of Hell at any given moment except the mere pleasure of God.*

By the mere pleasure of God, I mean His sovereign pleasure, His unrestricted will, restrained by no obligation and hindered by no difficulty. Nothing else but God’s will has to the least degree,

or in any respect whatsoever, any part in preserving wicked men from destruction for even a moment. The truth of this observation may appear from the following ten considerations.

1. There is no lack of power in God to cast wicked men into Hell at any moment

Human hands cannot be strong when God rises up. The strongest men have no power to resist Him, nor can anything deliver them out of His hands. God is not only able to cast wicked men into Hell, but He can also do it easily. Sometimes an earthly prince finds it difficult to defeat a rebel who has fortified himself and made

Human hands cannot be strong when God rises up. The strongest men have no power to resist Him, nor can anything deliver them out of His hands. God is not only able to cast wicked men into Hell, but He can also do it easily.

himself strong by the numbers of his followers. But this is not the case with God. There is no fortress that is any defense from the power of God. Though vast numbers of God's enemies join forces against Him, they are easily broken in pieces. They are like large heaps of light straw before the whirlwind, or like large quantities of dry grass before devouring flames. We find it easy to step on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth.

 **Note: some pages are omitted from this book preview.**

AT THE CROSSROADS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

Two Different Destinies

Heaven and Hell are not legendary locations like Camelot or Atlantis but actual places where people spend eternity. They are very real, and they are as heavenly and as hellish as Jonathan Edwards described them. Therefore, he presented them as vividly as possible so that people would repent of their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. This is the good news of the gospel—that Jesus saves sinners from Hell and delivers them to Heaven if they will repent of their sin and through faith entrust themselves to Him as their Lord and Savior.

This is only good news, though, if you embrace it. The gospel is not merely a tradition or opinion but an actual choice with everlasting consequences. The Bible teaches that you will live forever endlessly experiencing either God's love or God's wrath. How you spend eternity is determined by the decision you make about Jesus Christ, who stands at the crossroads between Heaven and Hell. The path you choose from here leads to either everlasting joy or everlasting torment, so please consider carefully and choose wisely. You are staking your immortal soul on your decision.

**This is the good news of
the gospel—that Jesus saves
sinners from Hell and delivers
them to Heaven if they will
repent of their sin and through
faith entrust themselves to Him
as their Lord and Savior.**

Our Dusty Journey

Life is often viewed as a journey that begins at birth and ends in death. We each are born and then travel down our particular paths until our bodies stop functioning and our journeys end. But this is not the end, not according to the Bible. God tells us that we are embodied souls, and that when our mortal bodies die, our immortal souls live on. Your body is the temporary vessel that allows your eternal soul to interact with the physical world around you. It is your soul—your inner self that thinks, feels, and loves, that develops and displays your distinctive character and personality, and that directs your body to move and act—that is the real you. When your body dies, your soul lives on, and someday God will place it in a new body that will be yours forever. So your death is not your end. Your death begins a new life that continues forever in either Heaven or Hell.

This journey from birth through death to eternity is a dusty one. The Bible traces our lives from dust to dust and beyond:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread / Till you return to the ground, / For out of it you were taken; / For dust you are, / And to dust you shall return. (Genesis 3:19)

Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, / And the spirit will return to God who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, / Some to everlasting life, / Some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2)

We need to understand each step of our journey to appreciate the crucial choice facing us, for we only have this brief life to decide where we will spend eternity.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

God made you. You are not the result of an uncaused cosmic accident followed by evolution. The universe did not pop into existence out of nothing, explode, and then self-organize into the unimaginably intricate world in which we live. Something does not come from nothing. Explosions create disorder, not order. Design happens purposefully, not randomly. Living beings who are personal, intelligent, and moral do not gradually emerge from nonliving, impersonal, unintelligent, amoral matter and energy. No, you were personally and purposefully created by God Himself.

God made you with a body and a soul. He fashioned and formed you in your mother's womb, knit you together with bones and tendons, and clothed you with skin and flesh (Job 10:8–11; Psalm 139:13). Physically, you are God's unique creation, handcrafted to fulfill His purposes for you on earth. However you may feel about your physical self, from God's perspective you are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139 14).

Then God gave you a soul to give life to your body made in His image (Genesis 1:26–27). This means that you *resemble* God in important ways. You have a mind, emotions, a will, and self-awareness. It also means that you are able to *relate* to God and others in intimate and meaningful ways. You were made

 **Note: some pages are omitted from this book preview.**

INSPIRING BIBLE-BASED RESOURCES

A **THIRD** GREAT LOVE COMMANDMENT.

Within every human heart is the desire to be loved and to show love. It is the mark of God on our lives—a God who embodies love, who IS love, according to the Bible. In His Word, God gives us three great commandments, rules for operating in love with Him, with others, and with our Christian family. These commands should provide the foundation for everything we say and do.

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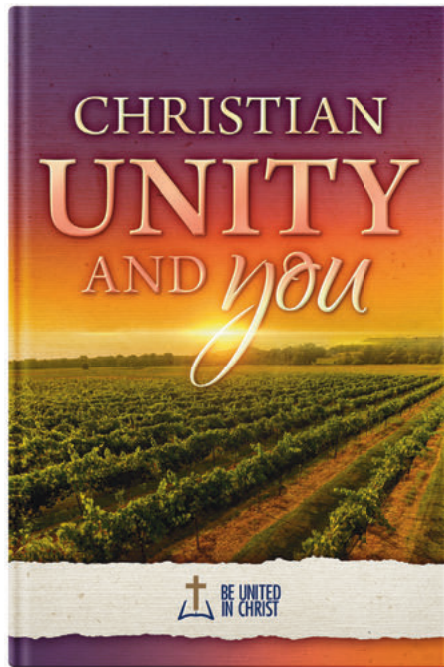
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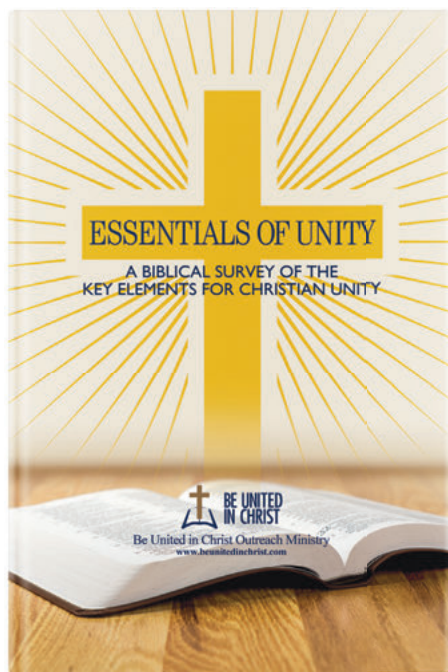


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UNITY IS ESSENTIAL FOR GOD'S PEOPLE.

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FEEL THE **PASSION** OF CHRIST FOR UNITY.

In John 17:20–23, Jesus prayed for His disciples to be **one** ... united with Him and each other. In His prayer, we hear the passion of Jesus Christ for the union of His people to God and to one another. *One: The Passion and Prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ* was written to help God's people understand the nature of this unity as well as how it is to be accomplished in the body of Christ.

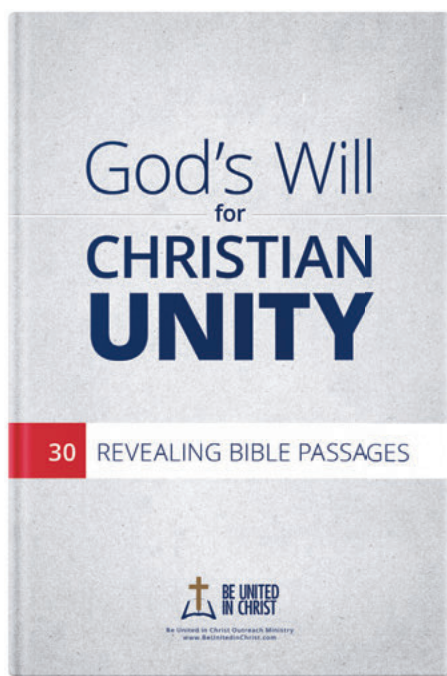
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BELIEVE IN GOD? READY TO **DO** HIS WILL?

The theme of Christian unity is found throughout the Bible. *God's Will for Christian Unity* clearly reveals, in thirty Bible passages, our Lord's passion and instruction on the meaning, importance, and manifestation of Christian unity. Understanding this collection of Bible passages will help you to know how you should think, feel, and act in relation to other believers in accordance with God's will.

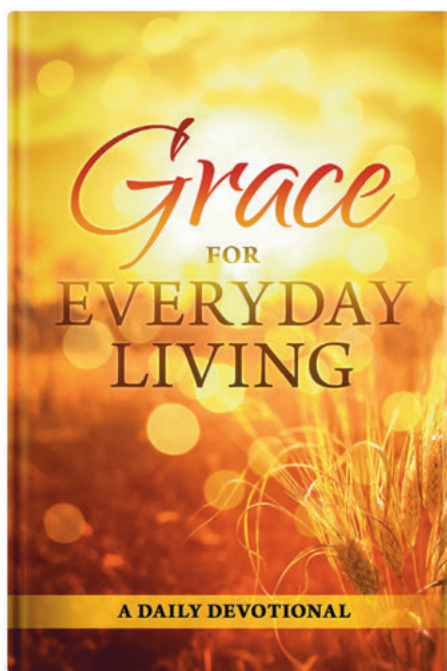
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WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH GOD'S GRACE?

God sees you. He loves you. And He wants you to experience a full and blessed life. In the 365-day devotional, *Grace for Everyday Living*, some of Christianity's most respected voices cast light on topics such as how to maintain a peaceful spirit, love others, and freely enjoy God's grace and mercy. Your life will be transformed as you discover the excitement of pleasing God and obeying His Word.

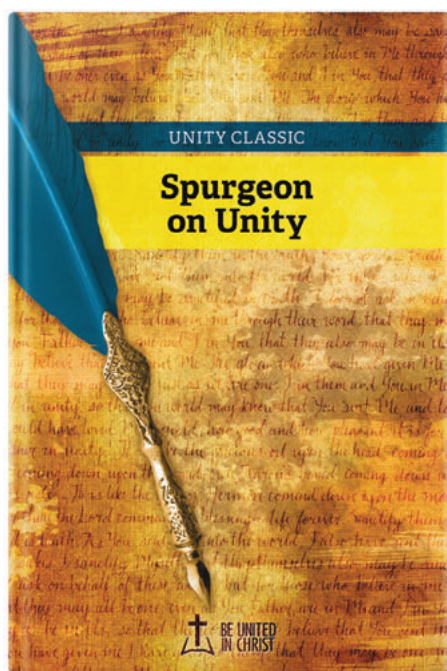
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The most prominent preacher of the 19th century, Charles Spurgeon pastored the world's largest mega-church and spoke to millions. Considered one of the greatest preachers in church history, his messages are as inspiring today as when they were first preached. *Spurgeon on Unity* lets you slip into the pew of this "Prince of Preachers" as he applies God's Word to one of your greatest needs.

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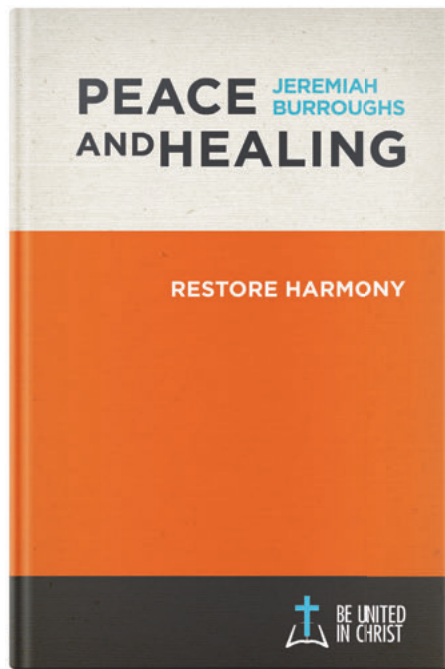


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MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.

The Be United in Christ Outreach Ministry is committed to teaching and promoting Bible-based Christian unity worldwide in order to bring about real change in the body of Christ.

As finances are available, we also help support Christ-centered ministries around the world including Christian orphanages, Christian drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, Bible colleges, Christian K-12 schools, after-school programs for at-risk children, the preaching of the gospel, and humanitarian efforts.

Consider making a donation at www.beunitedinchrist.com. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Everyone wants to go to Heaven. No one wants to go to Hell. However, most people understand very little about where they will spend eternity.

In the history of Christianity, no one has written as vividly on the realities of Heaven and Hell as Jonathan Edwards. His two sermons, "Heaven Is a World of Love" and "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," are two of the most powerful messages ever preached on the eternal choice facing each one of us.

Our book summary *Heaven Is a World of Love* does what no other resource has ever done before. It first summarizes these two sermons and then presents them in modern-day language to make them easy to understand. This valuable resource also clearly explains how the gospel of Jesus Christ determines whether you will spend eternity in Heaven or Hell. As you read this book summary, you will be encouraged with the hope of Heaven, sobered by the horrors of Hell, and assured that you can spend eternity enjoying the love of God.

The Be United in Christ Outreach Ministry's mission is to teach and promote Christian unity in accordance with God's Word. Visit **BeUnitedinChrist.com** to find more life-changing resources!

