

Episode 10: World Without End: The Last Things

What is beyond our visible reality? Can the human experience, our witnessing of beauty, friendships, or love be explained by science?

God is a God of justice. But where is justice – in life, the wicked doesn't always pay for their ways, nor the just rewarded sufficiently for their goodness.

Dante's hell. His image of the devil is not one standing in fire, but frozen in ice. St. Augustine described hell as "incurvatus in se" – caved in on oneself ; absorbed in the small confines on one's ego. We are meant to break out to the world. To be free is to be free of oneself. So to "sin is to voluntarily to turn away from God and to reign as the sovereign of one's own little kingdom"

It is painful for a person in a life of sin to experience the love of Christ. A person in darkness cannot tolerate the blinding glare once exposed to light. **How do we freely respond to God's love? In what ways can we respond negatively to God's love?**

C.S. Lewis "It is God's love that lights up the fires of hell". What did he mean by this?

Purgatory:

Loch Derg (known as St. Patrick's Purgatory): Penitential spiritual retreat where pilgrims trudge through rough stone on their knees barefoot and depriving themselves of sleep. Why would they willingly and voluntarily do this?

Barron writes: "This has nothing to do with cruelty on God's part, but rather it has to do with the sinner's perceived need to deal with the effects of sin"

- Bishop Barron's analogy of conversion of a worldly person, taking on missions work. Because of their previous lifestyle, they would experience hellish suffering. **What specifically might they experience?**

Many people leave this life as friends of God, but experience much suffering and live the life of Christ with much difficulty.

The Catechism (a book that summarizes the beliefs of the Catholic Church, written in 1992): "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their salvation, but after death, they undergo purification so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven"

The Unseen World

(21:22) God, the creator of the Heaven and the Earth, of all that is seen and unseen. Angels are the realm of the "unseen" – between our physical world and God, there are a great variety of spiritual creatures.

(30:58): Heaven:

The Beatific vision

"The beatific vision, in which God opens himself in an inexhaustible way to the elect, will be the ever-flowing well-spring of happiness, peace, and mutual communion" (CCC 1045).

St. Bernard of Clairvaux said, "Heaven's beauty cannot be taken in all at once. Rather, the more we see, the more we desire to see; the more we understand, the more we want to understand; the more we explore, the more we wish to explore."

"Heaven is never experienced alone. To love God is to love all those things and people loved by God." This is why our faith life is practiced in community, in the household of God" (1 Tim 3:15).

The City, the heavenly Jerusalem:

Here are some scripture verses:

Revelation 4:1: *"After this I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up hither, and I will show you what must take place after this'"*

Rev 5:6-7: *Then I saw standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and the elders a Lamb that seemed to have been slain. He had seven horns and seven eyes; these are the [seven] spirits of God sent out into the whole world. He came and received the scroll from the right hand of the one who sat on the throne.*

Rev 5:9-10: *They sang a new hymn:*

*"Worthy are you to receive the scroll
and to break open its seals,
for you were slain and with your blood you purchased for God
those from every tribe and tongue, people and nation.*

You made them a kingdom and priests for our God, and they will reign on earth."

The book of Revelation describes is a place of gathering of the faithful. Its description is similar to the Holy mass, as not merely a gathering of an earthly community, but rather an opening into heaven. We join the angels in singing and in worship:

Isaiah 6:1-3: *...I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above; each of them had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they hovered.*

One cried out to the other:

*"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!
All the earth is filled with his glory!"*

Which vision of heaven do you connect with? What is your own idea of what heaven is like?