

Back to the Basics

Deal or No Deal

We've just about all seen or at least heard of the television game show with Howie Mandel, "Deal or No Deal". In it, contestants can win up to 1 million dollars or walk home with next to nothing. And if you notice, this game is really all about greed and timing. Everyone wants to take the deal but only at the last possible moment. In the beginning of the game, the prize is very low and the better choices they make, the prize offer generally gets much higher. If they wait too long and make the wrong choice, they can lose everything. We can see the craziness when the offers get higher and higher and closer to the end. The contestant is listening to the audience with them saying "Deal" or "No Deal". Then they talk to their friends and family to get their advice and hear the same thing. But ultimately, it is the contestant alone who has to make the decision. Some times they're winners and many times their losers. It's either tremendously joyous or agonizingly sad because they have lost it all.

Now let's compare it to real life here on earth and looking at the Kingdom of God as the prize. Of course, everyone wants to go to Heaven to get the prize and no one wants to lose it all and go to that "other place". The human nature of greed is still the same. People don't want to have to settle down and live for Him until the last moment, so they can soak in as much life as possible. And then it's also about timing, waiting until the last possible moment. We want to make our own decisions and choose our own destiny. Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow <what?> we die. Enjoy life to the fullest. How can living for the kingdom of God possibly compare to that?

Let's look at becoming a Christian as saying "Deal" or reject becoming a Christian to saying "No Deal". After all, there are really only two options.

1. No Deal ...

Let's first look at option number one **No Deal**, very scary!

Prayer

John 3:3 (NIV)

³In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

Else what?

John 3:5 (NIV)

⁵Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."

Else what?

John 3:7 (NIV)

⁷You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

Else what?

John 3:16 (NIV)

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Else you perish!

John 3:35-36 (NIV)

³⁵The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Else God's wrath remains on you!

John 3:16 talks about the love of God. Now, what is this love? What are we talking about when we talk about the love of God? Well, some have suggested that it means we have tranquility of mind, we have a sort of a psychological sense of security; we have a sort of positive feeling about being secure. After all, God would certainly never send me to Hell. I'm not a bad person, I try to do the right thing all the time, not hurt anyone intentionally, you know what I mean, God is a good God. He loves me.

The fact that He loves you is true but the intention of this passage is not that He gives you a free pass to heaven because of His love. Notice it specifically says that because of his great love for us, He gave us His Son. It does not speak of feelings it speaks of a relationship. Feelings are not the issue here. **Romans 5:1** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The verb translated **we have** is in the present tense, indicating something that is already possessed. Many of a believer's blessings must await his resurrection and glorification, but **peace with God** is established the moment he places his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now if we have not chosen to follow Him yet and we have not truly taken His deal, what kind of relationship do we now have with God? It is simply a three letter word that begins with a 'W'. What's the opposite of peace? **War!** Now Christ has dramatically changed our relationship to God and that's what it is talking about here. Before coming to Christ, we were at war, so to speak. God was our enemy and we were His enemy.

Romans 3:10 (NIV)

¹⁰As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

The entire human race is unrighteousness.

Romans 3:23 (NIV)

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The entire human race has sinned.

Isaiah 64:6 (NIV)

⁶All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

All of the good things we try to do don't mean anything to God. He is repulsed by them if we try to "earn" our way into heaven.

James 2:10 (NIV)

¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

God has been at war with you from the first moment you sinned.

People will always say - Hey, I've never been at war with God, I like God. But the Bible says before you come to Christ you're at war with God. And some people might say - Well, now wait a minute, I'm religious and I don't have anything against God, I believe in God, and I'm even concerned of what He thinks. I don't see myself as an enemy of God. I don't see myself actively engaged in striking blows at God's Kingdom. I don't see myself overtly set against His divine plan and His purpose and His will. I don't see myself at war with God.

That's right. And that isn't the issue. The issue is not that you're at war with God, you know what the issue is? God is at war with you! That's different, isn't it? Because you may say - Well, I'm not, I don't see myself fighting God, I don't do anything to fight God overtly. That's not the point. God is your enemy, whether you are consciously His enemy or not. And His plan is this - you are so much His enemy and He is so much at war with you that someday He will take you and cast you into an eternal lake of fire to burn forever and ever. That's how much God is at war with you. Whether you understand that you are at war with Him or not, you should really understand that He is at war with you. Now, that puts it in a different light, doesn't it? You see, God is at war with the sinner. God is the enemy of the sinner. God fights against the sinner. God is the enemy of sin. God is the enemy of Satan. And by the way, if you're not a child of God, you're a child of Satan and you belong to Satan's dominion and God is at war with that dominion. And that's the point.

You say - I'm not angry with God. That's fine. God's angry with you. I'm not doing anything to harm God. That's fine. God's going to send you to eternal hell. You see, that's the point. God is at war with men whether they're conscious of their own animosity toward Him or not. If you haven't "taken the deal" in your lifetime, God is at war with you! Let's find out some more about the wrath of God.

Romans 1:18 (NIV)

¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

No Deal! You see, it's God who's at war with the ungodly and the unrighteous, and those who do not know Christ. In fact, God even says if you don't embrace Jesus Christ you are anathema, you are cursed.

Exodus 22:24 (NIV)

²⁴My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.

No Deal!

Deuteronomy 32:21-22 (NIV)

²¹They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding. ²²For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below. It will devour the earth and its harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains.

What is your god now, your life's priorities, money, home, security, family? What are most important things to you? No Deal!

God is furious. And who is He furious with? He is angry with sinners, very angry.

Joshua 23:16 (NIV)

¹⁶If you violate the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, the LORD'S anger will burn against you, and you will quickly perish from the good land he has given you."

No Deal!

Isaiah 5:25 (NIV)

²⁵Therefore the LORD'S anger burns against his people; his hand is raised and he strikes them down. The mountains shake, and the dead bodies are like refuse in the streets. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.

No Deal!

Isaiah 13:9 (NIV)

⁹See, the day of the LORD is coming - a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger - to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.

No Deal!

Isaiah 13:13 (NIV)

¹³Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.

No Deal!

Nahum 1:2 (NIV)

²The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies.

No Deal! So, men may not be that angry with God but God is very, very angry with them. And that's the reason they're sent to hell. And He's angry with them because of their unrepentant sin.

Ephesians 5:6 (NIV)

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

No Deal! Now, the sum of all of this attitude is best articulated in Psalm 7: 11. Just read it.

Psalm 7:11 (KJV)

¹¹God judgeth the righteous, and **God is angry with the wicked every day.**

No Deal!

Many people like coming to church but they really don't know if there's a God, but they like going to church because if there is one, they want to be sure He's on their side. You want to know something? God is not on the side of sinners. God is not on the side of Christ rejecters. He is their enemy. He seeks their destruction.

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Do you know why there's the delay? It's not because the Lord is slow about His promise of coming again. It's not because He's unfaithful to His Word. It's not because He doesn't tell the truth, it's not because He's impotent, it's not because He's indifferent, it's not because He's just busy doing something else as some men count slowness. Some men might think that. But the reason He's delaying is not impotence and indifference, the reason He's delaying is patience for people to repent. Do you see that? He's long-suffering. God is so very patient wanting people to 'take His deal' by taking a personal relationship with His Son. This is why God has brought you to this Bible study.

2. Take the Deal ...

Now when we 'take the deal', the Bible says we will be living in the city of New Jerusalem when we leave this earth. Now why a city? Is it a city like we know a city? Well probably not; it will be different, surely. Not like we know a city. In the first place there won't be the politics of a city. There won't be the corruption of a city. It will just be a different kind of city.

What does a city mean? It means harmony, mutuality, responsibility, sharing of duties. We'll all have tasks and duties in that place. We'll socialize at all different levels and points and means and ways. And yet perfect oneness, nothing to mar or interrupt pure fellowship. Can you imagine pure fellowship? Can you imagine a society of people where no one ever gets mad? Where no one ever does anything wrong? Or no one ever says anything wrong? Where no one ever thinks anything wrong? Can you imagine a society where everyone gets along absolutely perfect? Can you imagine a society where everyone loves everyone like God loves everyone? Where everything is absolutely perfect?

Just think about heaven. Think about how hard it is to get along with people here. We love socialization. We love fellowship. We love communion, but it's so rocky and it's so difficult and people disappoint you and discourage you and irritate the life out of you. But if you take the deal, you will someday be with perfect people with perfect love in a perfect place forever and ever and ever. And if you love the brethren, you've got to get excited about that.

Isaiah 60:19-20 (NIV)

¹⁹The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. ²⁰Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.

Revelation 21:11 (NIV)

¹¹It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

Revelation 21:23 (NIV)

²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

Notice that, you don't need stars and sun and moon anymore. You don't need them because God will light the whole, get this, of the infinite heaven, particularly this sparkling celestial jewel called the New Jerusalem. You know, when you study about heaven, you read about the fact that there's no lamp in heaven and there's no light there because the Lord is the lamp of it, the Lord is the light, and as you read about heaven you find out that everything is transparent in heaven. The streets of gold are transparent. The layers and foundations and so forth are made out of jewels through which the very glory of God will radiate. Heaven must be like some utterly incomprehensible flashing crown of jewels with the glistening of the glory of God from the inside radiating out of every refracted element of it and if we take the deal, we are going to be little different than that. We're going to be caught up in that whole, incredible display of glory and become reflectors eternally of the full majesty and glory of the infinite God Himself. And the Bible says in Romans 8:23 and 2 Corinthians 5 verses 2 & 4 that we groan waiting for the redemption of our body because our bodies get in the way of the reflection of the glory of God. And whenever you read in the Scripture about Jesus' coming, He's always coming in power and great glory and His blazing glory that will be radiated through us.

And now, he moves into its design. And this is interesting. And remember now, he's trying to describe the indescribable.

Revelation 21:12-17 (NIV)

¹²It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. ¹⁶The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. ¹⁷He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using.

He measured the city with a rod. Converting this from New Testament Greek, its length is as great as the width. Fifteen hundred miles, its length and width and height are all equal. He measured its walls, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements. It's a cube measuring fifteen hundred miles, fifteen hundred miles, fifteen hundred miles. Did you know that that the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple was a cube twenty by twenty by twenty? This is the Holy of Holies of eternity. The New Jerusalem would actually go from the tip of Florida to

the tip of Maine stacked up, length, width and height in a cube. Incredible, there will be millions of golden avenues intersecting; a place of majesty, a place of beauty.

Okay, now wait a minute. Let's go through this a little bit. Okay, it's a literal city. It's a symmetrical city. Look again at verse 12. It had a great and high wall. He put a great and high wall. It's a symbol of security, a symbol of protection. Like all ancient cities, safety was of importance to the people. They wanted a place where there was security.

Revelation 22:14 (NIV)

¹⁴"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

Notice that Jesus says in Revelation 22:14, the only people who can come in are the ones who wash their robes. They can enter by the gates. The gates then symbolize the fact that somebody's in and somebody's out. Somebody is in and somebody is out. The wall is a symbol of inclusion and a symbol of safety and a symbol of protection and also a symbol of exclusion in that all that is unworthy is left outside.

There are twelve gates and each one has a guard. Each of the gates has the name of a tribe of Israel showing God's eternal covenant relationship with Israel, as well as the bride. And though it's called the bride's city, it's very clear that it's identified with Israel and we then conclude that it's a place where all the saints of all the ages may abide.

Revelation 21:13-14 (NIV)

¹³There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Twelve is the number of perfect symmetry and the number of completeness. Twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve tribes, twelve foundations, twelve Apostles, twelve pearls, twelve kinds of fruit, twelve thousand furlongs and twelve by twelve cubits. God's into twelve when it comes to the eternal state.

When you take the deal, you come and go. And don't think this is where we're all forever contained, it's not. We have the infinite universe to travel through. And since we can get from here to there in the twinkling of an eye, it won't be any problem to cover infinity anytime we want rapidly. But we will go in and out of this place through those wonderful gates. God is then identifying the old covenant people and the new covenant people in a wonderful way in this city.

Revelation 21:18 (NIV)

¹⁸The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.

Why that? Because emanating out of the middle of that thing is the glory of God and it needs to have transparent stone to flash through. And again you're back to this sparkling diamond that's coming out of the sky. It says, look at this, the material of the wall was jasper, the city was pure gold like clear glass.

And by the way, we'll have different perceptions anyway. Something could be solid and still transparent. After all, Jesus in His glorified body walked through a wall. So we don't really know specifically what it means. But everything you look at is transparent. And that's to

demonstrate that the glory of God is blazing through. And then he describes the foundation. Adorned with every kind of precious stone.

Revelation 21:19-20 (NIV)

¹⁹The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

Now we don't know what to say about that other than to say it's just unbelievable beauty. Colored jewels forming a dazzling picture, transparent glass, diamonds, gold color, the whole thing is beyond description. That's the majesty of heaven.

Revelation 21:21 (NIV)

²¹The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

Imagine that, imagine. We don't know how big the gates are but each of them is one pearl. You say, "I'd like to see that oyster." There never was an oyster, folks. If God wants to make a pearl, He can make a pearl. He doesn't need an oyster. But each gate is one pearl, transparent, then the street of the city was pure gold, again like transparent glass.

Consider the thought that in order to enter the city you have to go through a pearl. Heaven is entered through a pearl. What's the significance? A pearl is made by a little animal, a little tiny animal. You know what it takes to make a pearl? That animal has to be wounded. And then as that little wounded animal begins to treat its wound, it creates a pearl. And the thought is that we enter heaven through a pearl symbolic of the one who was wounded for us. And it was through His wounds that He created the pearls that usher us into His holy and eternal presence. Heaven is entered through suffering, travail, by blood, the agony of the cross. No wound, no pearl. And we enter through the pearls made by the wounded redeemer, what a thought.

Revelation 21:22 (NIV)

²²I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

We said that already. The temple is the presence of God.

Revelation 21:23 (NIV)

²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

It's just blazing light, lit by the presence of God and the Lamb.

Revelation 21:24 (NIV)

²⁴The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.

The glory of all other men, the rule of all other men is dissipated into nothingness. All kinds of people will be there. And even the highest people, I think the idea here is even the kings of the world, the noble men, the high and the mighty, if you will, will give up their glory for the glory of heaven.

Revelation 21:25 (NIV)

²⁵On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.

In ancient times, the city gates were always shut at night, keep out robbers and brigands and trouble makers, other armies. But since there's no night, the gates will never shut. Perfect freedom, perfect security, come and go as you want, perfect protection.

Revelation 21:26-27 (NIV)

²⁶The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

No one will ever be in there but the people whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life, who put their faith in Christ and take a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Revelation 22:1 (NIV)

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Again everything is crystal, transparent so that the light of God can shine through

Revelation 22:2 (NIV)

²down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

You eat for enjoyment in heaven; you don't eat for sustenance. You eat just for the taste, just for the sheer ecstasy of whatever it is they're going to have on that tree. Healing is the word from which we get therapeutic, health giving. The leaves don't provide healing for sickness; they promote the enrichment of life, that's all. They're just for the sheer joy of eating. The water is for the sheer joy of drinking. No substance is needed but all substances are enjoyed. Wow, incredible.

Revelation 22:3 (NIV)

³No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

Wow, no more curse!!

Revelation 22:4 (NIV)

⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

That's the symbol of ownership, the identification that we belong to Him.

Revelation 22:5 (NIV)

⁵There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

No more curse, no more sin. The throne of God and the Lamb are there. What a great, great reality. That's what you're headed for if you have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what you're headed for. Is it any wonder that the Apostle Paul said this:

1 Corinthians 2:9 (KJV)

⁹But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

You remember the story about Moses? He went up into the mountain, God was there and God revealed Himself to Moses and when Moses saw the glory of God. You remember what happened? He got glory all over his face. He came down the mountain and he didn't know, it says, that his face shone, it was like a light bulb. And it says he veiled his face because the glory was fading and he didn't want the people to see the glory fade. You see, in our bodies, in our human instruments, the glory fades very fast even when seeing the revelation of the afterglow of God on the mount, it didn't last in Moses' case. But there will come a time when you will be lifted from one level of glory to another level of glory, to another level and finally that ultimate level of glory when you become in the image of Jesus Christ, able to manifest the full blazing glory of God Himself.

Philippians 3:20 (NIV)

²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

We're looking for the Savior from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, look ...

Philippians 3:21 (NIV)

²¹who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

We're going to be like Christ. We're going to radiate and be reflectors the divine glory of God. How about Colossians 3:4?

Colossians 3:4 (NIV)

⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

We're not going to be these crummy little creatures like we are now, running around this heaven of glory. We're just not going to be what we are here on earth. We're going to be reflectors of the glory, we're going to be like Jesus Christ transfigured. Oh, what a marvelous incomprehensible reality.

You say - I've read John chapter 3 a lot, I never saw this there. You say - I'm glad I see it now. You see, that's the joy of Bible study, you can just skip over the words and it doesn't mean much but the deeper you dig, the more profound it becomes. The reason we are secure is because God has given us the hope that is built into our salvation that we are saved unto glory, and that He doesn't lose the people He redeems to glory.

John 10:27-30 (NIV)

²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one."

When we take the deal, we are secure. The Holy Spirit then gives us the ability and leads us to hear His voice and follow Him. Without a question, please go home, find a quiet place. Ask the Lord Jesus to forgive your sins, and that you intend to follow Him for the rest of your life. In short, **“Take the Deal”**.

John 3:3 (NIV)

³In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

Prayer

For more information, reference John MacArthur's “The Security of Salvation, Part 1”, <http://www.gty.org/Resources/transcripts/45-40>.