



Heaven[👑]

Living in this Reality

A Seven Week Study from Fellowship Church @ Plum Creek



Heaven[👑]
Living in this Reality

Author: Chris Smith

Edited by Paul Valdez, Jonathan Leftwich

Fellowship Church @ Plum Creek

Copyright © 2020



HEAVEN SERIES OVERVIEW

Week 1	Can this Be Real?	Introduction to Series
Week 2	The Marriage of the Lamb	Revelation 19:1-10
Week 3	The Return of the King	Revelation 19:11-21
Sunday, April 12, 2020 EASTER SUNDAY		
Week 4	1000 Years in the Future	Revelation 20:1-10
Week 5	Before the Great White Throne	Revelation 20:11-15
Week 6	Heaven on Earth	Revelation 21
Week 7	Come/Drink from the Water of Life	Revelation 22

Overview of our Weekly Study

A Glimpse at Reality

In this section, we will look at our primary Scripture and begin to examine the passage from the book of Revelation.

The State of Reality

In this section, we dive into the deep end and explore the details found in Revelation. We will investigate supporting Scriptures from all around the Bible.

Walking in This Reality

In this section, we will take the knowledge learned in the previous sections and apply them to our lives.

Reality Check

In this section, we will finish up our week with some review questions.

An aerial photograph showing a vast, dense sea of white, fluffy clouds. The clouds are illuminated from above, creating a bright, ethereal atmosphere. The sky above is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is serene and majestic, evoking a sense of being high above the ground.

Week 1

Heaven:

Can this Be Real?



An Introduction to this Reality

What will heaven be like? This is one of the most common questions people ask when they begin to think about eternity. Unfortunately, there are so many misguided ideas about heaven in our culture, movies and music that it can be difficult to know the truth. Our goal throughout this study is to tackle some misconceptions about heaven and to develop a proper view of heaven. We are going to start this study with a general truth about heaven.

Truth: This earth is just a shadow of things to come.

- **Colossians 2:13–17** *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ^[14] by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ^[15] He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. ^[16] Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ^[17] These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*
- **James 1:17** *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

This is so incredible. Let's see if you can follow my logic.

If every good and perfect gift comes from above, then everything good we experience on this earth is in heaven without the shadow of sin over it. More vibrant colors, more intense joy, sweeter tastes, more fulfilling relationships with God and others and more that we cannot even imagine. This is the heaven of the Bible. Currently sin at work in us is trying to rob us of the abundant life in Christ that we can experience right now which is only a glimpse. *Psalms 16:11 says You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.* God has promised us pleasures forever more and fullness of joy! Whooooo!!!! I cannot wait!

I am not sure if you are as excited as I am. Why? Why is it tough to be excited about heaven?



The primary reason it is difficult is because the prince of the power of the air, our enemy Satan, is trying to undersell eternal life in Jesus. Of course, he is! Satan is a liar and desires our destruction, sorrow and shame. You see, the enemy's lies run rampant in the three major misconceptions of Heaven that run through our culture. Let's take a look at them one at a time.

Misconception #1 - Heaven will be a never-ending song service

We will be worshipping God throughout our time in heaven! There will be some times of group gatherings with the songs of every tongue and nation, but it is a misconception to think that worship is only singing.

We will worship using our bodies.

- **Romans 12:1** *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

We will worship God by talking about Him.

- **Hebrews 13:15** *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*

We will worship the Lord through dancing and celebration.

- **2 Samuel 6:14–15** *And David danced before the LORD with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn.*

We will worship through serving Him.

- **1 Peter 4:10–11** *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ^[11] whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

What are some of the ways that you personally worship Christ daily that don't involve singing praises?

Which of the ways of worship above is most exciting to you?



Misconception #2 - Heaven will be boring

Boring? Really? This comes from the lie that all we will do is play a harp on a cloud. There is a simple scriptural answer in 1 Corinthians 2:9

1 Corinthians 2:9 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—

Heaven will be better than we could even possibly imagine. We will dive into this even more as we go through this series, but we know that we will:

Live in a heavenly city

- *Hebrews 11:16* But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

We will work for the joy of creating

- *Isaiah 65:21–22* They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

Reign with Christ

- *Matthew 19:28–30* Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Do you think heaven will be boring?

What is something you hope will be in heaven?



Misconception #3 – Good people go to heaven and become angels

So much of the world still believes a false doctrine that good people go to heaven; however, we know that no one comes to the Father without a relationship to Jesus.

- **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- **Ephesians 2:8–9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Have you heard this misconception? What are your thoughts about it?

People who know Jesus go to heaven. We will be transformed but not into angels. We will be an improved imperishable version of ourselves in heaven not angels. Our personality, our mind including some memories and emotions are all part of our soul and we know that our soul is coming with us into heaven.

- **Mark 8:34–38** And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ^[35] For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. ^[36] For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ^[37] For what can a man give in return for his soul? ^[38] For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

We will most likely recognize each other and continue our relationships because we believe relationship are eternal.

Who do you want to see again in heaven?



Heaven

Living in this Reality

Are you excited that you will still have part of your personality in heaven? Yes No

Why? _____

We see some evidence of relationships being eternal in the story of Jesus in Luke 16. We see that the rich man recognizes the poor man Lazarus.

- **Luke 16:19–24** *“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ^[20] And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores ^[21] who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. ^[22] The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, ^[23] and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ^[24] And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’*

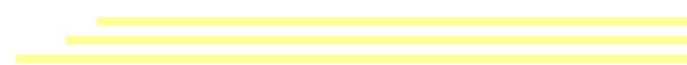
Peter recognized Moses and Elijah as Christ was transfigured. Remember, there was not a textbook with old pictures of Moses and Elijah to help them. No Facebook or Instagram, to scroll through pics yet they recognized them both.

- **Luke 9:32–33** *Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ^[33] And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said.*

The relationships we build in Christ on this earth will continue in eternity. This simple fact should encourage us to love and encourage one another.

Sometimes, relationships are hard, but they are worth it in view of eternity. What relationships do you hope to continue in heaven?

How do you show the love of Christ to others?





Walking in This Reality

As we begin to build out a proper view of heaven throughout this study, we can rest in some simple truths. These truths should encourage us as we walk with Christ.

#1 Jesus was lifted up into heaven and is coming back for us!

- **Acts 1:9–11** ^[9] *And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ^[10] And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ^[11] and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”*

We can look forward to the physical return of Christ according to Acts 1 and these witnesses testify that heaven is a real place where Jesus lives. They got a glimpse and didn't want it to stop.

How is this truth encouraging to you?

#2 Jesus is the only way to heaven and he is preparing a place for us in Heaven

- **John 14:1–6** *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ^[2] In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ^[3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ^[4] And you know the way to where I am going.” ^[5] Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ^[6] Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

To the world, John 14:6 is offensive. Why?



Heaven

Living in this Reality

Jesus is THE truth not a truth. Because of this we can live out **Romans 1:16** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* What does an unashamed life look like?

According to these verses in John 14, our hearts should not be troubled when we trust in God. Therefore, a proper view of heaven should bring us peace.

How does peace set us apart from the world?

#3 God has set eternity in our hearts. We long for Him.

- **Ecclesiastes 3:11** *He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.*
- **2 Corinthians 5:1–9** *For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ^[2] For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ^[3] if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ^[4] For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ^[5] He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. ^[6] So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ^[7] for we walk by faith, not by sight. ^[8] Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ^[9] So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.*

What should a longing for eternity produce in us?



Reality Check - Small Group Questions

How can a proper view of heaven be an encouragement to you in your walk with Christ?

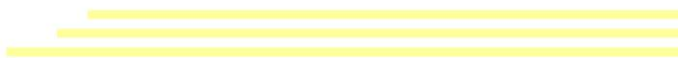
Which of the common misconceptions do you see around you in our culture?

How could believing wrong things about of heaven be dangerous to our faith?

Have you encountered people that take offense at the teaching that Jesus is the only way to heaven?

How would you, in gentleness and love, explain the concept of Jesus as the way, the truth and the life?

What is something you are looking forward to learning about heaven?





F₄ O₁ R₁ E₁ V₄ E₁ R₁

Week 2

Heaven:

The Marriage of the Lamb



A Glimpse at Reality

Welcome to Week 2 of the Heaven series. This week, we will focus on the marriage process of the church and the Lamb, Jesus Christ. God is remarkable how he sets patterns in our earthly life that point us to the return of Jesus. We will start our journey by reading Revelation 19:1-10.

Revelation 19:1–10

^[1] After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ^[2] for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” ^[3] Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.” ^[4] And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” ^[5] And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.”

^[6] Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ^[7] Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ^[8] it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

^[9] And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” ^[10] Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

What verses above stir your affection for heaven?

Hallelujah is word of praise that transcends languages, nations and tongues. Hallelujah, in every language means “praise Yahweh”. Look back in the verses above and circle each hallelujah reference.

What descriptions of God are mentioned after each hallelujah circle you made above?



The State of Reality

As we dive into the topic of the marriage supper of the Lamb, we are going to consider the Jewish tradition of the wedding feast. In the Jewish traditional wedding, there are three primary parts.

- The Marriage Contract
- The Procession
- The Marriage Supper



We are going to work our way through all three components and relate these to the book of Revelation.

The Marriage Contract

The first phase of the Jewish wedding is the contract. Traditionally, the Father of the groom would choose a bride and pay a dowry to the bride's family. Afterwards the groom would approve of his father's choice. The dowry, the cost for the bride, would mark the beginning of the engagement period until the groom and Father had finished the home preparations, which could last a year or more.

Do you see any similarities with the marriage contract described above and Christ's sacrifice for you?

How do these verses imply that God has initiated a contract for the bride of Christ, the church?

- **John 15:16** *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.*
- **John 14:1-3** *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ^[2] In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ^[3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*



Let's look at a biblical example. We see Joseph and Mary, during this contract phase, facing the birth of Jesus. What do we see of Joseph's character as he interacts with Mary?

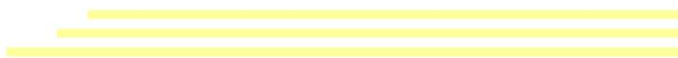
Matthew 1:18–21 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ^[19] And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ^[20] But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ^[21] She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Torchlight Parade through the Streets

The second phase of the engagement is the Torchlight Parade through the streets. This parade signified the moment that the groom would come for his bride. The groom would arrange a time for his party to come typically just before midnight in the middle of the darkness with a parade of lights. Everyone involved would carry a torch or lantern and join the parade as it passed by on the way back to the groom's home to begin the celebration. If you did not have a light, you were assumed to be an uninvited guest or wedding crasher.

How does this torchlight parade point towards Jesus as our groom?

Can you think of any Bible verses about light that would be significant?





We see an example of this early in Matthew 25 where Jesus gives a “torchlight parade” parable. Read the passage below with the context of the wedding phases.

- **Matthew 25:1-13** *“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ^[2] Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ^[3] For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ^[4] but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ^[5] As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ^[6] But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ^[7] Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ^[8] And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ^[9] But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ^[10] And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ^[11] Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ^[12] But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ^[13] Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”*

We see two different approaches by the virgins. One wise and one foolish. Who are these two groups in today’s culture?

The wise virgins are those born-again Christians who are prepared for the return of Christ. **Romans 10:10** *For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

The wise came prepared for the coming of the groom. Are we ready? What are some key preparations we should make as wise believers?

The foolish virgins are those people that enjoy the Christian community but don’t know Jesus. They serve and do many works for others, but they do not know the saving grace of Jesus.

How do the verses below demonstrate this idea?

- **Matthew 7:21–23** *Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’*
-
-



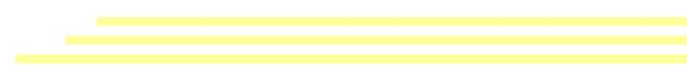
Judging others by their outward activities can be deceiving. Only God can judge because only God can know the true intentions of the heart. What are some of the dangers on judging others by their works?

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

What we see in Revelation 19:7-10 is not the actual marriage supper of the Lamb. What verses below back up that claim?

Revelation 19:7-10 *Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; [8] it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. [9] And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” [10] Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

We are seeing the invitation phase and the final preparations for this glorious celebration. We are going to dive more deeply into the invitation process in the next section.





Walking in This Reality - Personal Application

When we begin to think about the marriage supper of the Lamb, we can be assured of a few things in our hearts that are relevant to us in our daily lives. And this is the key, as we dive into this Heaven series. What can this future glory build in our hearts and minds to help us be more like Jesus?

Here are a couple of things to consider.

Because of Revelation 19, we know we are chosen and invited!

We, the church, are the bride of Christ.

We see this illustrated in the two verses below.

- **2 Corinthians 11:2** *For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.*
- **Ephesians 5:25–32** *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ^[26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ^[27] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ^[28] In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ^[29] For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ^[30] because we are members of his body. ^[31] “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ^[32] This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*

Why do you think God uses this analogy to describe our relationship to Him?

He has chosen us to be His bride.

We know that in the marriage process the Father chooses the bride. God has chosen us and loves us.

- **John 15:16** *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.*

What should our response be to this truth?



We have been invited to be a part of His plan.

The connotation of the phrase ‘He has chosen us’ causes some people say “great, I guess I don’t have to do anything now” but that is not what God is stating. Remember back in Ephesians 2:8-10.

- **Ephesians 2:8–10** *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ^[9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ^[10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

God has given us such an incredible gift in grace! But, we are also His workmanship created to do good works that we should walk in. Equally, we are invited to be a part of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Have you accepted the invitation? Did you RSVP?

Let’s look at a challenging parable in Matthew 22 called The Parable of the Wedding Feast.

- **Matthew 22:1–14** *And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ^[2] “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ^[3] and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. ^[4] Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ ^[5] But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ^[6] while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. ^[7] The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ^[8] Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ^[9] Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ ^[10] And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. ^[11] “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. ^[12] And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ^[13] Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ^[14] For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

What are your thoughts on this parable?



It was typical in a Jewish wedding to send out invitations twice. The first invitation was to an exact number of people chosen to attend based on the amount of food and the proximity to the bride and groom. The bride and groom would then send more invitations after they received the RSVP's now knowing how many open spots they had for their reception. How did we see this play out in the parable?

Changing our focus to the God's story of redemption, who was invited to the wedding first?

Who were the servants sent to tell those invited about the wedding supper?

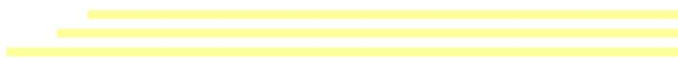
Israel, God's chosen people, were the first invited and the prophets came to serve and declare the excellence of God, but the Jewish people were not ready to accept Jesus as the promised Messiah. So, God sent others into the world to invite the Gentiles, grafting them into the people of God. The invitation is open, so the questions that beg to be answered are these:

Are you going to the wedding? Who else are you inviting to go with you?

Is the Father unjust in the parable? No, He invites everyone but some refuse (v.1-3), some are too busy (v.5-6) and others are simply distracted (v.5-6). The strangest action in the parable is when the guest is found who is not dressed properly for the wedding. Who is this?

- Option #1 – Someone who does not have the light. An unsaved survivor of the tribulation living in the millennium possibly.
- Option #2 – A believer at the Bema seat who is not clothed in righteousness.

Option #1 is the most likely scenario although this is still considered a mystery.





Heaven

Living in this Reality

Do you encounter people who reject the call of Jesus because they are too busy or distracted? How can we reach them for Christ?

The final truth of this section is:

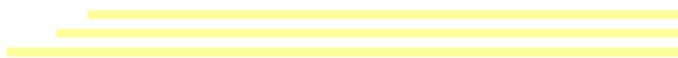
Because of Revelation 19, we know we are loved as a bride is loved.

Remember back to **Ephesians 5:25** *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, and if Christ loves us and if God loved us when he chose us* **Romans 5:8** *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Then we can love others because **1 John 4:19** *We love because he first loved us.*

We know that because of that love and the promise of the marriage supper that Christ is preparing a place for us to live with Him for eternity in heaven. **John 14:3** *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*

How do you recognize the love of God at work in your life?

What causes us to miss out on this wonderful love of God?





Reality Check - Small Group Questions

What is the best wedding you have ever attended?

What excites you the most about the future marriage supper of the Lamb?

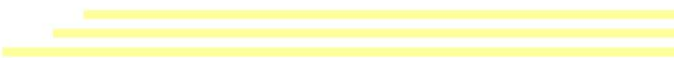
The Jewish wedding ceremony is a type, showing us the call to salvation. What part of the marriage process was most enlightening to you?

Which parable was the most interesting to you about the wedding process?

During the torchlight parade, only those with a torch or lantern were invited into the feast. How does that mirror the spiritual reality we live in?

How do you understand the love of God?

Do you feel loved by God?



Week 3

Heaven:

The Return of the King





A Glimpse at Reality

We have made it through to Week 3. This week, we will study the remarkable return of Jesus. Oh, what a wonderful day that will be. Let's jump straight into Revelation 19:11-21.

Revelation 19:11–21

^[11] Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ^[12] His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ^[13] He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ^[14] And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ^[15] From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ^[16] On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

^[17] Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ^[18] to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." ^[19] And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. ^[20] And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ^[21] And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

This is Jesus!!!

Faithful and True

- **Hebrews 10:23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.
- **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

The Word of God

- **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- **John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.



King of kings

- **1 Timothy 6:13–16** I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.
- **Zechariah 14:9** And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.

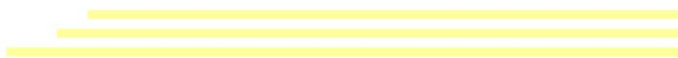
Lord of lords

- **Isaiah 9:6** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- **Revelation 17:14** They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

Sometimes we forget how amazing Jesus is! Which of the names above is most impactful for you? Why?

Which verses from the list is most praiseworthy to you?

Let's begin with a prayer of thanksgiving for Jesus. Pause and reflect on our Lord and Savior.





The State of Reality

The return of Christ, often referred to as the Second Coming of Christ, will be an unbelievable event. Why is it referred to as the second coming, you may ask?

One reason is **Hebrews 9:27–28** *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

This event is recorded in Revelation 19:17-21.

^[17] Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, ^[18] to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” ^[19] And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. ^[20] And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ^[21] And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Let’s look at some things we know about this extraordinary event.

Record your thoughts about each below.

1. The second coming will be a loud life changing event

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*



2. Everyone will see Jesus

Matthew 24:27–30 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ^[28] Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. ^[29] “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ^[30] Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.



3. Jesus will not return alone

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

4. His return will be physical and spiritual

Acts 1:10-11 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”



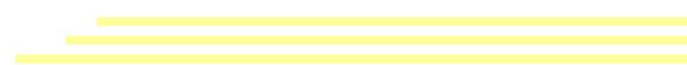
5. The second coming destroys the wicked of the earth

Revelation 19:17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ^[18] to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." ^[19] And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. ^[20] And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ^[21] And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

When you think about the second coming of Christ, what emotions come to the surface?

What other things have you thought about the second coming that have not been mentioned?

Are you excited about Jesus coming back? Why or why not?





Walking in This Reality

How do we make the return of Christ personal to our day-to-day life? Here are a couple ideas.

#1 We have no doubt that Jesus has the victory

- **John 6:39-40** *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."*

Do you ever struggle with doubt?

There are several dangers of letting our doubt consume us.

Doubt erodes our trust in the Lord which leads to anxiety.

- **Proverbs 3:5** *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.*
- **Psalms 55:22** *Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.*

Do you experience anxiety? All the Time On a Regular Basis Sometimes Not Usually

How can the victory we have in Jesus help us in our anxiety?

We will not receive from the Lord.

- **James 1:5-8** *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

Is this verse from James 1 an encouragement or discouragement? Why?



We begin to accuse God of wrong.

- **Mark 4:35–41** *On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”*

Have you come across this danger in your conversations with others?

#2 Hope does not put us to shame

- **Romans 5:2-5** *Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*
- **Titus 2:13** *Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*
- **Romans 8:24-25** *For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

What role does hope play in your life?

If we know that God gets the victory, our hope is certain even though it is unseen.



#3 We live for eternal things

The Return of Christ is the ultimate transitional event from the physical to the spiritual, perishable to the imperishable. This verse from the book of Matthew highlights that.

Matthew 6:19–21 *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, [20] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

This brings to mind a question.

What are these treasures that I should lay up in heaven? Let's try our best to make a list:

#1 The word of God endures forever

- **1 Peter 1:25** *But the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*
- **Matthew 24:35** *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*

Our Reply to this Truth: Knowing, memorizing and learning the word of God is not a waste. We need to do it!!! The word of God will come to life in heaven.

How can you make the word of God a bigger part of your life?

#2 Our soul endures forever

- **Ecclesiastes 12:7** *and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.*

Our Reply to this Truth: We discussed this Week 1 but as a reminder, our personality, emotions and memories will endure. We will still be ourselves in heaven, so the work that we do to become like Christ on this earth is worth it.

How can I make transformation into the likeness of Jesus a bigger part of my walk?



#3 Love is eternal

- **Psalm 136:1** Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.
- **1 John 2:17** And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Our Reply to this Truth: Our desires for the things of this world will pass away but the love we extend, to God first and to others second, will endure.

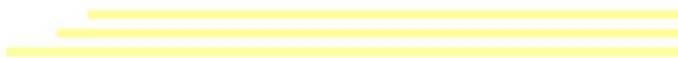
How can you make loving God and loving others a bigger part of your walk with Christ?

To live for eternal things can be summed up this way.

The word of God spurs us to know God more and to become like Jesus in love. Our goal is to walk as Jesus walked, putting away the desires of this world, and to love as Jesus loved, sacrificially with grace.

What are your thoughts on the quote above?

What would you add to the quote to summarize eternal things?





Reality Check

Does the return of Christ excite you or scare you?

Which of the names of Christ in Revelation 19 is most inspiring?

Have you ever struggled with doubt in your walk with Christ? How did you resolve them?

What role does hope play in your life?

In church life sometimes, verses get overused or misused. How do these common verses encourage you in reference to the hope we have in Jesus?

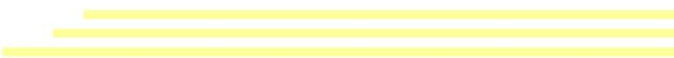
- **Jeremiah 29:11** *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*
- **Isaiah 40:31** *But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*



Hope and endurance are often mentioned together. Why do you think that is?

According to Romans 15:4, the encouragement of Scripture is leading us to hope. *Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.* What are your thoughts on this idea?

Of the list of eternal things that we should live for, which is most prominent in your life? Which is the most lacking?



A scenic landscape featuring a large body of water, likely a lake or fjord, nestled between green, rolling hills and mountains. The sky is filled with dramatic, grey clouds, and a bright sunburst effect breaks through the clouds in the center, casting a golden glow across the water and the surrounding landscape. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

Week 4

Heaven:

1000 Years in the Future



A Glimpse at Reality

Can you believe it is Week 4 already? I hope that you have been working on those eternal things these last few weeks. I hope your celebration of Jesus and His resurrection was spectacular. How was your break?

This week, we study one of the most mysterious times in history with the 1000-year reign of Christ. Let's jump in.

Revelation 20

^[1] Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ^[2] And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ^[3] and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

^[4] Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ^[5] The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ^[6] Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

^[7] And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ^[8] and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. ^[9] And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, ^[10] and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

I am sure there are a lot of questions you have after reading this passage. Let's keep on working to discover some truths about this time.

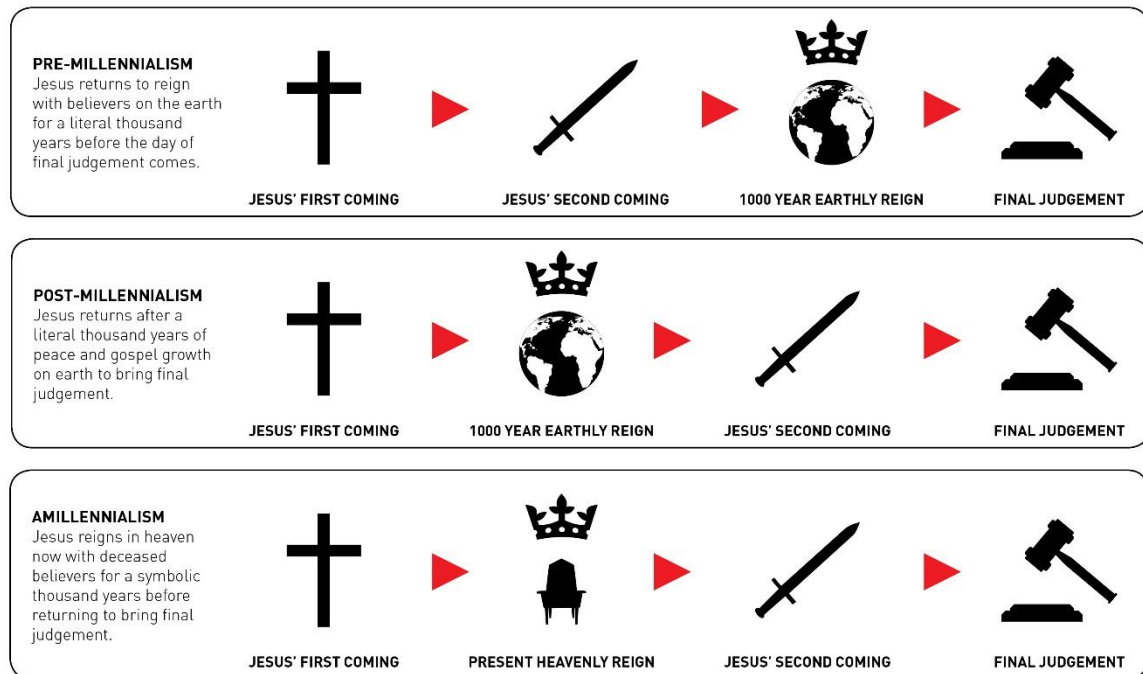


The State of Reality

There are three primary views of this time in history that we call the Millennium. Here is a simple graphic describing each view and a simplified timeline.

THE MILLENNIUM THREE VIEWS

© 2010 Mark Barry. Please do not republish without permission, but feel free to copy for personal use.



For the sake of this study, we will be teaching the Pre-Millennial view although many amazing Christian brothers and sisters hold to Amillennial and Post Millennial positions.

Which view do you think is most likely? Why?



In the Pre-Millennium viewpoint, the 1000-year reign of Jesus will begin directly after the return of Christ, just as it is in our study. There is much speculation around this 1000-year period, so let's begin our time with some things we know from Scripture and then add in some inferences and speculation. I will try to be clear on the differences between the two.

Millennium Key Event #1 – We get a new imperishable body.

When we are caught up together with Jesus, we get to trade in the perishable for the imperishable.

- **1 Corinthians 15:50-57** *I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ^[51] Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ^[52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ^[53] For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ^[54] When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” ^[55] “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ^[56] The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ^[57] But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- **2 Corinthians 5:1–5** *For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ^[2] For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ^[3] if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ^[4] For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ^[5] He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*

We don't know exactly what this body will be like but we know it will be better by far than what we have on this earth. This passage in 2 Corinthians 5 continues with an encouragement for us.

- **2 Corinthians 5:6–10** *So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ^[7] for we walk by faith, not by sight. ^[8] Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ^[9] So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.*

What does it say the result of the promise of the imperishable should be in our current life?



Millennium Key Event #2 – The Bema Seat

At the beginning of the Millennium, there will be a time of accountability with Christ called the Bema Seat. The Bema seat, in antiquity, was a place of decision where the leader would pronounce freedom, rewards or punishment. We see Pontius Pilate pronouncing judgment on Jesus at the Bema seat in **John 19:13** *So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha.*

A couple of truths about the Bema seat.

1. The Bema Seat is not about salvation. It is important not to confuse the Bema seat with the White Throne Judgement that we will talk about in next week's study. Our salvation, our justification, is in Jesus alone and we cannot lose our salvation.
 - **John 10:28** *I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*
2. The Bema Seat is not about judgement but about accountability for the life we live.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:10** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*
 - **Matthew 12:36–37** *I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*
3. The Bema Seat tests our works and we will receive crowns for God's glory.
 - **1 Peter 5:4** *And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*
 - **2 Timothy 4:8** *Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

What are your thoughts about the Bema Seat?



Is this another Bema seat verse?

- **1 Corinthians 3:10–15** *According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ^[11] For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ^[12] Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—^[13] each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ^[14] If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ^[15] If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

Some people believe the 1 Corinthians 3 passage above refers to something different than the Bema seat judgment and others use it as a chief proof of the Bema seat. As for this study we will not use it for more than a picture of what our works could look like before the Lord.

We all agree that Jesus is the cornerstone and the foundation of our faith.

What sort of works would survive the judgement of Christ? Answer: eternal things (see Week 3) like:

What sort of works are worthless, burned up by the fire? Answer: Desires, worldly possessions like:

What will it be like to live in the Millennium?

Christ will rule the Earth from Jerusalem for the 1000 years.

- **Zechariah 14:9** *And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.*

Are you excited to see Jesus reign on the earth?



We will reign with Him during this time.

Revelation 20:4-6 *Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ^[5] The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ^[6] Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.*

Does this excite you or make you nervous? Why?

Christ will rule and he will teach and uphold the law. There is still a chance for some to sin.

- **Isaiah 2:2-4** *Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.*

Who can sin in the Millennium if we have a redeemed body?

There will be a mixture of people (perishable), saints (imperishable) and angels (heavenly beings) in the Millennium. Only the people (perishable) can sin in the millennium. The question, then, is who are the people(perishable) in the Millennium?

We don't really know but here are three possible guesses in no particular order.

Guess #1: People who survived the Tribulation that did not take the mark of the beast.

Guess #2: The nation of Israel in some form

Guess #3: The children of believers born during the Millennium

Which guess do you ascribe to?



There will be a re-creation of the earth with peace and joy

Isaiah 65:17–25 “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. ^[18] But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. ^[19] I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. ^[20] No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. ^[21] They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ^[22] They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ^[23] They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them. ^[24] Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. ^[25] The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

What part of the Isaiah 65 passage do you look forward to the most?

- a. No more weeping or distress v.19
- b. Building and creating in the Millennium v. 21
- c. Christ answering our questions before we can even ask v.24
- d. Wild animals now tame, the wolf, lion etc. v. 25

Why?

What else from the verses in Isaiah 65 interested you?



Millennium Key Event #3 – Satan is let loose at the end of the 1000 years

What happens to Satan and his team during the millennium?

Revelation 20:1-3 *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ^[2] And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ^[3] and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.*

The bottomless pit is different from the lake of fire. It is a temporary place. Why is it temporary? Because at the end of the Millennium, Satan will be let loose to deceive the perishable one final time.

Revelation 20:7-10 *And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ^[8] and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. ^[9] And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, ^[10] and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

What do you think of this time mentioned in the 1000-year reign?

Which of the three events are you most intrigued with?



Walking in This Reality - Personal Application

When we think of this future life that we have in the Millennium, we can easily lose sight of the life that we live in this current world. Let's apply some things we have learned to our present life.

#1 Life in Christ requires faith. Seeing isn't always believing!

The Millennium teaches us that even when Christ rules in person on the earth people will doubt and be deceived by Satan in the end. We see this same thing in the gospel story.

The Great commission is one of the most famous passages of Scripture in the church but look at the mood directly before Christ gives the commission.

- **Matthew 28:16–20** *Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ^[17] And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ^[18] And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ^[19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ^[20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Christ has risen from the dead and is walking among them. He is about to ascend into heaven and people still doubted. We know this feeling well. Let me illustrate. Which photos below are real?





(The Lion and Biker pictures are fake on the last page)

#2 We need to live as one who has to give an account for our life.

How can we live a life worthy in view of the Bema seat of Jesus? Let's create a list using the word of God as our guide.

Colossians 1:10 So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

We should bear much fruit.

- **Galatians 5:22-23** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

What are some practical ways we can live out the fruit of the Spirit?

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-control



Heaven

Living in this Reality

The key to bearing fruit is abiding in Christ.

- **John 15:5** *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

How do you abide in Christ daily? Weekly?

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

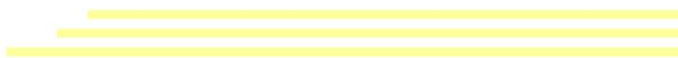
We are created by God to do good works.

What are some examples of good works we should be doing as Christians?

Paul encourages Titus likewise to thrive in good works.

- **Titus 3:8** *The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.*
- **Titus 3:14** *And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.*

Which of these verses is most encouraging towards good works?





Heaven

Living in this Reality

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

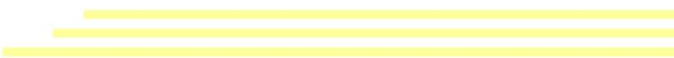
We are created to be the light of the world!

What does it mean to be a light in our world?

How do these verses encourage us to be a light?

- **Ephesians 5:8** *For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*
- **Psalm 27:1** *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*
- **1 John 1:7** *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

How do the verses above relate back to the parade of lights that the groom would carry to get His bride?





Reality Check - Small Group Questions

What are your questions/thoughts about the millennium?

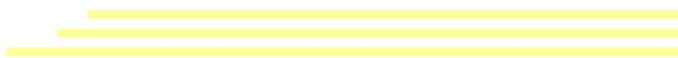
The Bema seat can cause fear in some or it can be an encouragement to live holy. What are your thoughts on the Bema Seat?

Have you heard the phrase, 'I will have to see it to believe it?' Does that hold true in your life or are you a natural skeptic?

Which verses this week have been the most encouraging during your study?

Which of the fruit of the spirit is easiest for you live out? Which is most difficult?

What does it mean to be light of the world?





Week 5

*Heaven:
Before the
Great White Throne*



A Glimpse at Reality

Week 5 of the Heaven series is at hand. This week, we peel back the veil and take a glimpse into the throne room of God, as we discuss the Great White Throne judgement at the end of Revelation 20. Let's read about it together.

Revelation 20:11-15 *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ^[12] And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ^[13] And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ^[14] Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ^[15] And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

What jumps out to you from this passage?

We have had a couple other glimpses into the throne room in the Bible. The most famous in in Isaiah 6.

Isaiah 6:1-5 *In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ^[2] Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ^[3] And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" ^[4] And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ^[5] And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"*

What words come to mind when you think about a throne?

How do these verses give us more insight to God's throne?

- **Psalm 89:14** *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.*
 - **Psalm 103:19** *The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.*
-
-



The State of Reality

When we begin to discuss the white throne judgment, we see that God will be upon His throne as Judge and the dead will rise to stand before Him.

- **Revelation 20:11-13** *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ^[12] And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ^[13] And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done*

The dead, great and small will be held to account while believers will inherit eternal life.

- **Matthew 13:47-50** *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ^[48] When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. ^[49] So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ^[50] and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*
- **John 5:24-29** *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. ^[25] “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ^[26] For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ^[27] And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. ^[28] Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ^[29] and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.*

What are your thoughts about the passages above? What emotions stir up?



Heaven

Living in this Reality

The Great White Throne will be a judgement of works for the dead. Everyone will have to give an account. Christians at the Bema Seat and the lost at the Great White Throne Judgement. Some people will be surprised at their fate as Matthew 7 emphasizes.

- **Matthew 7:21–23** *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ^[22] On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ^[23] And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’*

When you read these verses, it is easy to fear. The name of Jesus is key here. What would it look like for someone to do “things” for God without even knowing Him?

Maybe you answered similar to those surrounding Jesus, after He met the rich young ruler, in **Luke 18:26** saying *Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?”*

How can we be sure that we are not in this category because, as we have studied, God does not want us to doubt? John gives us a great assurance in 1 John 4.

- **1 John 4:13–18** *By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ^[14] And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ^[15] Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ^[16] So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ^[17] By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ^[18] There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*

What is your favorite part of the Scripture above?



When we abide in Christ, we feel and know the love of God.

Love covers a multitude of sins. Therefore, as we understand how much we were forgiven, we are then able to forgive others. We can rest in the truth of knowing God is the perfect Judge.

- **Romans 14:10–12** *Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; ^[11] for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” ^[12] So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

Is there a situation that you have been involved in that stretched your ability to forgive others?

The hardest part of the White Throne Judgement is found in Revelation 20:14-15 *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ^[15] And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

Hell and Eternal Judgement

One of the most difficult doctrines in the entire Bible is the concept of hell as an actual place. We typically like to bury this reality deep in our subconscious. In this study, we will look at a few sobering facts about hell.

Two Phases of Hell

Phase 1 Hell – The current place of holding for the dead who do not know Jesus. Sheol, or grave, was used mostly in the Old Testament while Hades, Gehenna and Tartaro are typically used in the New Testament.

Phase 2 The Lake of Fire – The final place for those who have rejected Jesus; also referred to as the second death. **Matthew 25:41** *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Hell is a correct term for both although there is a slight difference in the nature of both.



Who will be thrown into the Lake of fire?

- **Revelation 21:8** *But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."*

The key description is faithless. Faith in Jesus is the only way to escape the fires of hell.

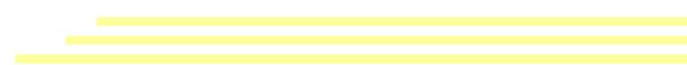
We have a tendency, sometimes unknowingly, to think of hell as unfair. What about the girl in the bush of Australia that has never hear the name of Jesus? What about ...? Do you ever feel this way?

How does Romans 1 help answer that question?

- **Romans 1:18–20** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ^[19] For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ^[20] For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

Hell is not an unjust punishment because we all sin and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) God in His power and nature has made Himself known to everyone. We cannot blame God for the world's rejection of Him. He has invited everyone to the wedding feast. In turn, we each will have to give an account for the lives we live.

Do you feel like God is unfair in creating hell? Why?





What will hell be like?

Jesus tells us a story in Luke 16 that many scholars believe is a glimpse into spiritual future of all mankind.

- **Luke 16:19–31** *“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ^[20] And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ^[21] who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. ^[22] The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, ^[23] and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ^[24] And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ ^[25] But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ^[26] And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ ^[27] And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—^[28] for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ ^[29] But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ ^[30] And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ ^[31] He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”*

Descriptions of Hell from Luke 16

There is a physical pain.

- Torment v. 23
- Thirst, anguish from the flame v. 24

There is a mental anguish

- The rich man can see into heaven v. 24
- The rich man remembers his old life and wishes his family could know eternal life. v.27-31

There is no hope of heaven after death

- There is a great chasm between heaven and hell v.26

How do you feel about this description?



Walking in This Reality - Personal Application

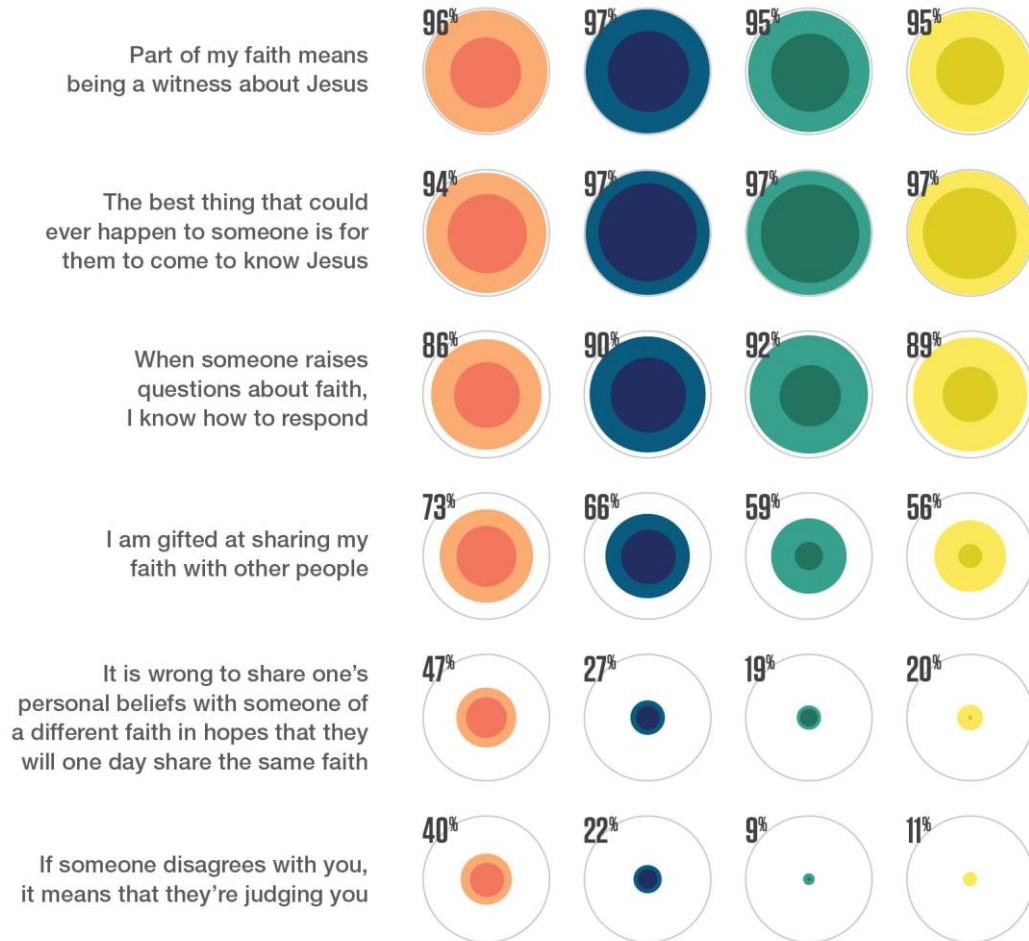
When we begin to think about the White Throne Judgement and the reality of hell, we should all be motivated to share the gospel with everyone we encounter. But what factors affect our desire to share our faith. Check out this chart by Barna about different generations sharing their faith.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES ON FAITH-SHARING Barna

% strongly + somewhat agree among US practicing Christians

● Dark = Strongly agree
● Light = Somewhat agree

● Millennials ● Gen X ● Boomers ● Elders



n=992 US practicing Christians 18 and older, May 2018.

© 2019 | barna.com



A Couple Observations from the Chart:

- 47% of millennials feel like it is wrong to share their faith and feel judged when they do.
- Older generations are less confident in sharing their faith.
- Everyone knows that part of being a Christian is being a witness.

Were you surprised by anything?

We need to share the gospel of Christ effectively

We need to be bold in our speech about Jesus.

- **Romans 10:14–17** *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ^[15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” ^[16] But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” ^[17] So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

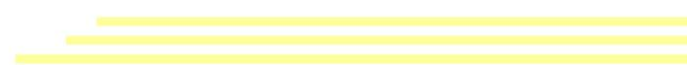
How confident are you in talking about Jesus?

What should we say?

God has a plan to redeem the world.

- **Colossians 1:20** *And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

How can you see God’s plan at work throughout your life?





We all fall short of God's plan through sin.

- **Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Sin leads to death. How have you experienced this process in your life?

Jesus died on the cross for our sins.

- **Romans 5:8** *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Christ's death on the cross was the ultimate sacrifice for us. He endured the cross for our sake.

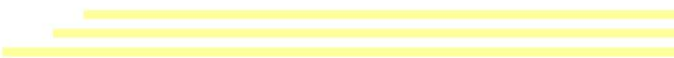
- **Hebrews 12:1-2** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

When you think about Christ's sacrifice on the cross, what words come to mind?

Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate expression of love.

- **John 15:13** *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

How does the cross encourage you to love others?





If we turn to Jesus, we will be saved

- **Romans 10:9** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Confession is a public proclamation of your faith in Jesus through words and baptism.

Believing in your heart is putting your faith in Jesus.

Are you willing to let Jesus be Lord of your life?

Which of these steps do you feel most confident talking about with someone else?

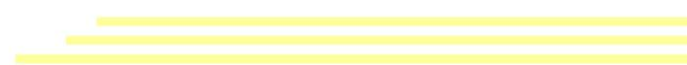
How does Mathew 6:19-21 apply to sharing your faith?

Matthew 6:19–21 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,^[20] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.^[21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

As we share the gospel with those around us, we earn crowns in heaven given to us at the Bema seat of Christ. Notice Paul’s proclamation to the Thessalonians.

- **1 Thessalonians 2:19–20** For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.

How does this encourage you to share the gospel?





Reality Check - Small Group Questions

How do you feel about the phrase God is a Judge?

Many people struggle with the concept of hell, what are your thoughts?

Which of the following describes your emotions concerning hell?

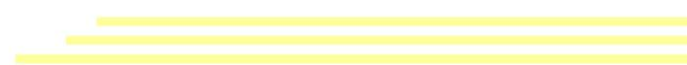
- a. Justice is served
- b. I understand hell but it makes me sad
- c. I struggle with feeling hell is fair
- d. I wish God had a different plan but I trust Him

Explain:

Why is sharing one's own faith such a challenge for people?

Share an experience where you shared your faith and it went well?

Share an experience where you shared your faith and it went poorly?



Week 6

Heaven: Heaven on Earth





A Glimpse at Reality

Welcome to Week 6. You have almost made it through. We have learned so much about the eternal life we have in Jesus Christ and the eternal future of those who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This week, we will look into the new heaven and new earth described in Revelation 21. Let's start by reading the first 8 verses.

Revelation 21:1-8

^[1] Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ^[2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ^[3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ^[4] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

^[5] And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

^[6] And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ^[7] The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ^[8] But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

God will dwell with His people. What other details do you learn about heaven from these verses?

What names of God do we see illustrated in this passage?

Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, Beginning and the end, our Father, Creator, Our God. Spend a few minutes in praise and prayer for our study this week.



The State of Reality

This version of heaven is the final edition. Some people would call this the Third heaven. This phrase 'Third' heaven comes from:

- **2 Corinthians 12:2-4** *I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. ^[3] And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—^[4] and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.*

The major view on the term the 'third' heaven is shown below.

1st Heaven – The Earth's Atmosphere

- **Deuteronomy 28:12** *The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands*

2nd Heaven – The Universe/Space

- **Psalms 19:1** *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

3rd Heaven – God's Dwelling Place

- **Matthew 5:16** *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

Another view of the third heaven is the third describing stages of heaven.

1st Heaven – Presence of God where we go when we die.

- **Genesis 1:1** *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*
- **Luke 23:43** *And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."*

2nd Heaven – Heaven on Earth/Millennium with a redeemed heaven and earth as one

- **Ephesians 1:10** *as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*
- **2 Peter 3:7** *But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*

3rd Heaven – Our Heavenly Home

- **Revelation 21:1** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.*

Which view do you see as most reasonable? Why?



How does Hebrews 4:14 below fall into your view?

Hebrews 4:14 *Therefore, since we have such a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we profess.*

Either way, let's take a closer look at this Heaven in which we get to spend eternity. Let's read the rest of Revelation 21 and take note of the look of things.

Stadia = .11 of a mile or 185 meters

Cubit = 1.5 feet or 45 centimeters

Revelation 21:9-27 ^[9] *Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." ^[10] And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ^[11] having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ^[12] It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—^[13] on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ^[14] And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

^[15] *And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. ^[16] The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. ^[17] He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. ^[18] The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ^[19] The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ^[20] the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. ^[21] And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

^[22] *And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ^[23] And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ^[24] By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ^[25] and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ^[26] They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ^[27] But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Observations:



Observations

God is our light...literally

There is no Temple

There will be nations and kings

12 Gates and Travel

Conclusions

With our imperishable bodies we will not need sleep. It will be light all day everyday with Jesus.

We will always be in the presence of God

There will still be people all around the earth with work and identity

People will be travelling in an out of the New Jerusalem bringing glory to the King of kings

The Dimensions of the New Jerusalem Comparison



The new Jerusalem would be a 1380-mile cube with 12 gates for travel and 12 foundations. The walls would be 216 feet thick and it seems that the view will be spectacular.



Walking in This Reality - Personal Application

As we set our hope on this heaven, how can we apply this knowledge to our current life?

#1 The reality of Heaven gives me peace.

Peace has become an even more urgent prayer of ours over the last few weeks. We can only find peace when our hope is in Jesus and being with Him for eternity. How does Hebrews 11:6 relate?

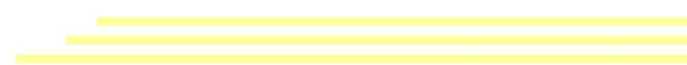
- **Hebrews 11:6** *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*

How does 2 Corinthians 4 below encourage us to have peace in the knowledge of heaven?

- **2 Corinthians 4:16–18** *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ^[17] For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ^[18] as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

How is it comforting to know that our home is in heaven?

- **Philippians 3:20** *- But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*





Heaven

Living in this Reality

Where does our help in times of trouble come from? It comes from the Lord. What encouragement do you find in 2 Timothy 4:18 below?

- **2 Timothy 4:18** - *The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Summarize, how does the knowledge of heaven stir our hearts and mind towards peace?

The reality of Heaven causes me to celebrate.

We know that the angels celebrate in heaven over one sinner that repents. We also know that the temple and Jewish festivals have merely been a shadow of things to come. This means, we will one day celebrate in heaven with all of God's creation.

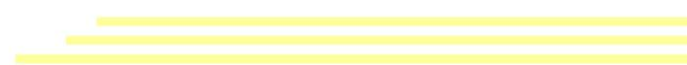
- **Hebrews 12:22** - *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,*

Does it excite you to celebrate the things of God in heaven?

We have an inheritance in heaven through the living hope of Jesus Christ.

- **1 Peter 1:3-4** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ^[4] to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,*

How can the knowledge of heaven help us to live a joy filled life now?





The reality of heaven causes me to be humble.

The revelation of God's plan for all time should cause us to stop in wonder. His ways are so much higher than our ways. When we reflect on these things, we are humbled. We so often think we are in control, but our God is so much bigger and he calls us to get smaller.

How does John 3:30 encourage us?

- **John 3:30** *He must increase, but I must decrease."*
-
-

- **Matthew 18:3-4** *and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ^[4] Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

What does it mean to be humble like a child?

In the Old Testament, we see one of the greatest calls to humility.

- **2 Chronicles 7:14** *If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

What does God encourage us to do if we want to see a healing of our land?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



Why is humility so hard?

Here are some possible reasons.

Because we are impatient to wait for God's timing.

- **1 Peter 5:6** *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,*

Is this true about you? In what ways?

Pride creeps into our lives.

- **Romans 12:3** *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.*

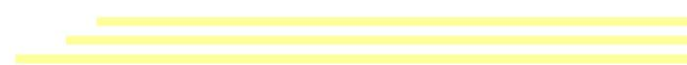
Do you see pride at work in you?

We live in a world of competition and comparison.

- **Philippians 2:3-4** *Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

How does comparison attack your faith?

How can competition affect you in a negative way?





Reality Check - Small Group Questions

What was your favorite part of the lesson this week?

True or False:

True False **The reality of Heaven gives me peace.**

True False **The reality of Heaven causes me to celebrate.**

True False **The reality of heaven causes me to be humble.**

Which of the marked true above is most impactful on your life?

Have you learned anything new about heaven in this series?

What do you look forward to the most in heaven?

How do you think we can more effectively live out **2 Chronicles 7:14** *If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.?*

A scenic waterfall cascading over dark, mossy rocks in a forest with autumn foliage. The water is captured in a long-exposure shot, creating a soft, white, silky texture as it flows down the rocky tiers. The surrounding trees are in various stages of autumn, with some showing vibrant yellows and oranges, while others remain green. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Week 7

Heaven:

*Come & Drink from the
Water of Life*



A Glimpse at Reality

This is the final week of our heaven series, Week 7. I hope you have learned a lot about heaven over our time together. Today, we are going to make a few final points and we will dream together. Let's start by reading our final section of Scripture in Revelation 22. It is kind of long but we can read with endurance.

Revelation 22

^[1] Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ^[2] through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ^[3] No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ^[4] They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ^[5] And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

^[6] And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." ^[7] "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

^[8] I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, ^[9] but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." ^[10] And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. ^[11] Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."

^[12] "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. ^[13] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." ^[14] Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. ^[15] Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

^[16] "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." ^[17] The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. ^[18] I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ^[19] and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

^[20] He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! ^[21] The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.



The State of Reality

The last section of Revelation 22 is so powerful. Here are a couple notes.

In verse 7, ^[7] *“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”* We see God’s encouragement to us to apply this book of Revelation to our lives.

In verse 14, *Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates* we see a call to righteousness

- **Isaiah 61:10** *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

How have you noticed the book of Revelation calling us to righteousness?

In verses 8-9, we see an interesting exchange between the angel and John the author, ^[8] *I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, ^[9] but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”*

We are called to worship God alone. Angels are our fellow servants ministering to us as the time of Christ’s return draws near.

What other people of the Word are mentioned in verses 8-9?

In verse 11, *Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.*” We see God allowing the world to continue in its current state, even though heaven is a reality that awaits us.

Do you wish God would come soon to stop the evil and filth? Why or why not?



In the first part of Revelation 22, we get a better glimpse of the physical reality of heaven. Let's re-read verse 1-5.

- *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ^[2] through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ^[3] No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ^[4] They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ^[5] And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.*

There is a river flowing out of the throne of God. This is the crystal-clear river of life flowing through the middle of the streets of God in the New Jerusalem. On the side of the river are trees. These trees of life yield fruit in season meaning there is still some kind of time element in heaven. All things will be good. We will be able to see God's face and see His glory.

What are we going to do in heaven?

Yes, we will sing praises to our God.

- **Revelation 4:9–11** *And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ^[10] the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ^[11] "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."*

Does this worship make you excited about heaven?



Warning. This page is full of speculations on heaven for you to consider.

Will we do crafts and create just as God our Father is a creator?

- **Exodus 31:3–5** and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, ^[4] to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, ^[5] in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.

We know we will be able to build.

- **Isaiah 65:21** They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

If you could build or create anything you wanted, what would you try?

Will we be able to travel around God's creation?

- There are 12 gates for a reason and **Revelation 22:14** Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. We will enter His gates, (with thanksgiving in my heart)
- **Psalms 84:10** For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

If you could travel anywhere on our current earth where would you go? Why?

This may be a little far out (pun intended) but what if we could visit other places that declare God's glory?

- **Psalms 19:1–4** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. [2] Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. [3] There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. [4] Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun,

Unlimited time and an imperishable body could make our exploration limitless.



Heaven

Living in this Reality

We will get to see and experience God's glory!

- **Habakkuk 2:14** *For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*
- **Romans 8:18** *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*
- **1 Chronicles 29:11** *Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all.*

How do these verses point us to the glory of God?

I am going to chase a rabbit here and this is all speculation.

What if we were able to go back and experience the glory of God in the stories of the Bible.

Imagine going back in time to march with Moses through the Red Sea following the pillar of fire by night. Imagine seeing David kill Goliath as a spectator to the glory of God. Imagine being able to walk with the Son of God listening to Him teach the disciples, seeing Him heal the sick, the lame and the blind. Imagine seeing the tomb burst open to release our risen Savior. Glory to God in the highest! That would be a glorious time.

But also imagine, getting to look back at your life through new eyes with the glory of God perspective. We would see how God was protecting us, leading us and comforting us. We would get to see God's love for us even when we ignored His working. We would see God's purpose in all the struggles and the glory of God at work through us to affect the lives of others. What an incredible God we serve! What a gift to know that He is a personal God to each of us.

It is just a theory, but oh how I hope it is true.

If this virtual reality view of God's glory was true, what events in the Bible would you want to visit?

If this virtual reality view of God's glory was true, what events in your life would you want to visit?



Walking in This Reality - Personal Application

How can we make this personal? I want to encourage you in two ways.

#1 Our true rest is found in Heaven

Heaven will be a place of joy, fun and rest in Jesus. We will have access to the river of life and the face of God. In Him, we know that He has said:

- **Matthew 11:28-30** *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*
- **Psalm 46:10** *"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"*
- **Psalm 91:1-2** *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."*

How do you find rest in the Lord?

#2 Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness heaven on earth

We are called to hunger and thirst for the things of God.

- **Revelation 22:17** *The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.*

This echoes a verse from Isaiah 55

- **Isaiah 55:1** *"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*

Why do you think God describes it as drinking without price?



Heaven

Living in this Reality

What should we hunger and thirst for in this current reality? Here are a few things the Bible cites.

Righteousness

- **Matthew 5:6** “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

What does this hunger and thirst for righteousness look like in your life?

The Word of God

- **Job 23:12** *I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food*

Do you have a hunger for God’s word?

How does that play out in your life?

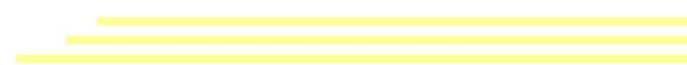
For the presence of God

- **Psalm 63:1** *O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*

Do you thirst for time with God?

How does the verse below spur you on to seek God?

- **Deuteronomy 4:29** *But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.*





Reality Check - Small Group Questions

In what areas do you need to grow in hunger for the matters of God?

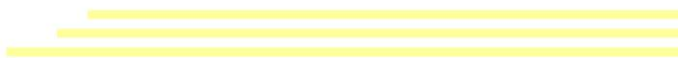
Do any of the guesses about heaven encourage you about eternity in heaven?

Which of those do you hope is true? Why?

What physical component of heaven are you most intrigued by?

Which of the verses on the previous page are most inspiring to you?

What is the one thing you will take from this study with you on your walk with Christ?





Heaven
Living in this Reality

Final Resources:

Week 1 Photo from Unsplash by Stacey Gabrielle Koenitz Rozells

Week 2 Photo from Unsplash by Gabby Orcutt

Week 3 Photo from Unsplash by Bhargave Srivari

Week 4 Photo from Unsplash by Davide Cantelli

Week 5 Photo from Unsplash by Chris Brignola

Week 6 Photo from Unsplash by Etienne Delorieux

Week 7 Photo from Unsplash by Nathan Anderson