

October 9th, 2022
Heaven: Week 2

If we're honest... We know very little about Heaven! Heaven is a place where Mystery and Majesty collide!

Question: Why do we need to investigate Heaven?
Heaven provides HOPE for the Future, but more importantly, HOPE for our Present!

Heaven will be a Paradise of...

- Sights
- Sounds
- Stories

I. The Theology of Heaven

There are a lot of words in the Bible that describe for us what we mean when we think about Heaven.

- The Heavenlies
- Paradise
- Abraham's Bosom

Definition- The location in which God directly manifests His Presence, and the dwelling where His Will is completed.

A. The Three Heavens

2 Corinthians 12:2 (NIV)

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven...

1. Initial Heaven

Revelation 21:1 (NIV)

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...

The Present heaven you will go to when you die as a Christ-follower.

2 Corinthians 5:8 (NIV)

We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Luke 23:43 (NIV) (Thief on the Cross)

"...TODAY you will be with me in Paradise."

Revelation 6:9-11 (NIV)

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you JUDGE the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.

Why does Intermediate/Initial Heaven exist? Why don't we just go to Heaven?

- a. Evil still exists- Our world is full of Evil
 - It is under the realm of Satan

1 John 5:19 (NIV)

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

- b. Final Judgment is the Grand Finale
 - *Revelation 20*- The end of Evil!

We need to be READY for this!

2 Peter 3:11-13 (NIV) (The Day of the Lord)

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

2. Ultimate Heaven

- The NEW heaven and earth God creates AFTER evil has been destroyed.
- Two Great Judgment
 - Judgment Seat- Great White Throne Judgment
 - God created a place for all mankind (EDEN), but Sin entered the picture, and this world has since been groaning because of the separation of God's full presence on this Earth.
 - The Rapture- First Coming (Christ alone)
 - Second Coming of Christ

Question: Does Earth give us a glimpse of what Ultimate Heaven will be like?

God created all of this around us for us to enjoy, AND for us to commune with Him.

Adam and Eve did not sit around all day in a concert and worship God.

- They had jobs!
- They had work and *purpose* (*Genesis 2:15*)
- They were to go and take dominion

Matthew 19:27-29 (NIV)

Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.

B. Heaven is described in Earthly terms

City- Hebrews 11:10 (NIV)

For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Country- Hebrews 11:16 (NIV)

Instead, they were longing for a better Country—a heavenly one...

Residents & Citizens- You get the ultimate passport!

- Japanese citizens now hold the most passport power, as they are able to enter 193 nations visa free.
- But there is still ONE that is Better!

Philippians 3:20 (NIV)

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

Question: What do you LOVE here on Earth?

- People
- Places/Travel
- Pets
- Food/Restaurants
- Coffee

What do you HATE on Earth?

- Sickness
- Death
- Pain
- People who don't turn Right on Red
- Tough Relationships
- Bad Days
- Cancer

We don't believe any of these are going to be in Heaven, so why is it hard for us to believe that there will be things we enjoy that will be in Heaven?

Here's the Bottom Line: We're not studying Heaven ONLY so it will change our Future...
We're studying Heaven so it will change our Present!

1 John 2:15-17 (NIV)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Question: Do you long for HEAVEN? If so, is that longing changing the way you are living today?

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 2

1. Have you thought of WHERE Heaven is? Why do you think that?
2. How would you define Heaven [PJ- *The location in which God directly manifests His Presence, and the dwelling where His Will is completed.*] Does this make sense to you?
3. Have you ever thought of a heaven before getting to Heaven? Was this a new idea for you? Explain.
4. How do you feel about Heaven having more things to do other than just worshiping around the throne? What do you wish you would be doing in heaven?
5. How has this study on Heaven helped you live better here on Earth?