

# Heaven & Hell

## Small Group Series & Study Guide

### **Small Group Guide:**

### **Heaven & Hell, Week 4**

#### **Key Takeaways:**

1. **The Rapture vs. The Second Coming:** The rapture occurs before the tribulation when believers are caught up to meet Jesus in the air. The second coming happens after the tribulation when Jesus returns to earth with His saints.
2. **The Jewish Wedding Tradition:** Understanding ancient Jewish wedding customs is essential to understanding the rapture. Jesus followed this pattern precisely in establishing His covenant with the Church.
3. **The Transformation:** At the rapture, believers will receive resurrected bodies like Jesus had after His resurrection—physical bodies of flesh and bone, but not subject to normal laws of time and space.
4. **Imminence:** The rapture could happen at any moment. There are no specific signs that must occur first, which

means we should always be watching and ready.

5. **Our Physical Future:** We need physical bodies because we will rule and reign with Christ on a physical earth during the millennium and eventually on the new earth.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. **Why is it important to distinguish between the rapture and the second coming of Christ?** How does this affect our understanding of end-times prophecy?
2. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.** What comfort does this passage offer to believers who have lost loved ones?
3. **Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2-3).** How does understanding this in the context of Jewish wedding customs deepen the meaning of these words?
4. **In the Jewish wedding, the bride had to be watching and ready with her lamp.** What does this mean for us practically as we wait for Christ's return?
5. **The sermon mentioned that the bride was "sanctified" or "set apart" after the covenant was sealed.** What does it mean for us to be set apart for Christ in our daily lives?
6. **How does knowing we will have bodies like Jesus' resurrected body change your perspective on physical death?**
7. **If you knew Jesus was returning tomorrow, what would you do differently today?** What does your answer reveal about your current priorities?

## **Practical Application:**

1. **Share the Hope:** Identify one person who doesn't know Christ and pray for an opportunity to share the hope of the gospel with them this week.
2. **Study the Covenant:** Read through the Last Supper accounts (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-20) and reflect on Jesus establishing the "new covenant" with His blood—the ultimate bridal price.
3. **Live Set Apart:** Identify one area of your life where you need to be more "sanctified" or set apart for Christ. What specific step can you take this week to honor Him in that area?

### **Closing Prayer:**

- **Readiness:** That we would live each day watching and ready for Christ's return.
- **Loved Ones:** For family and friends who don't yet know Jesus.
- **Comfort:** For those who have lost Christian loved ones, that they would find hope in the promise of reunion.
- **Gratitude:** Thank Jesus for paying the ultimate bridal price for us.
- **Anticipation:** Express your longing for Christ's return and the marriage supper of the Lamb.

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# **5-Day Devotion: Awaiting the Bridegroom**

**Day 1: The Covenant of Love**

**Reading:** John 14:1-6; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

**Devotional:** Jesus has entered into a covenant relationship with us, much like the ancient Jewish betrothal. He paid the ultimate bridal price—His own blood—to purchase us and make us His own. This wasn't a transaction; it was a declaration of immeasurable love. You have been bought with a price, set apart for Him. Consider today what it means to be sanctified—set apart—for Christ. Are you living in a way that honors the One who paid everything for you? Your body is His temple, your life His possession. Let this truth transform how you view yourself and your daily choices. You belong to the King of Kings.

## **Day 2: Preparing and Watching**

**Reading:** Matthew 24:36-44; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

**Devotional:** Jesus told His disciples He was going to prepare a place for them, and He promised to return. Like the Jewish bride who kept her lamp ready, not knowing when her bridegroom would come, we too must remain watchful and prepared. The imminent return of Christ should shape how we live each day. Are you ready for His return today? This isn't about fear, but about eager anticipation and faithful living. Examine your spiritual readiness—are you walking in holiness, sharing the gospel, investing in eternity? Don't let the cares of this world distract you from your true calling. Keep your lamp burning bright. Stay alert, stay faithful, stay ready.

## **Day 3: Transformed Bodies, Eternal Hope**

**Reading:** 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; Philippians 3:20-21

**Devotional:** Our resurrection hope is not ethereal or abstract—it's gloriously physical. Just as Jesus rose with a body that could be touched, that could eat, that was recognizable yet transformed, so will ours be. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, our mortal bodies will put on immortality. This is our blessed hope! When grief touches your life, when your body weakens, when age takes its toll, remember: this is temporary. A glorious transformation awaits. Your future body will be like Christ's resurrected body—powerful, incorruptible, eternal. This hope should fuel your perseverance today. Death has lost its sting; the grave has lost its victory.

## **Day 4: The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

**Reading:** Revelation 19:6-9; Matthew 25:1-13

**Devotional:** The ultimate celebration awaits—the marriage supper of the Lamb. All of history is moving toward this glorious moment when Christ presents His bride, the Church, in spotless purity before the Father. We will be clothed in fine linen, representing the righteous deeds done through Christ's power. How are you preparing for this wedding feast? The wise virgins kept oil in their lamps; the foolish did

not. Spiritual preparation cannot be borrowed or rushed at the last moment. It requires daily devotion, consistent obedience, and genuine relationship with Jesus. Make yourself ready through worship, holiness, and faithful service. The invitation has been given; will you be ready when the Bridegroom comes?

## **Day 5: Our Eternal Home**

**Reading:** Revelation 21:1-7; 2 Peter 3:10-13

**Devotional:** Heaven is not our final destination—a new earth is. God's plan has always been physical and earthly. He created Eden as a physical paradise; He will recreate earth as an eternal paradise. The New Jerusalem will descend to the new earth, and we will live in glorified bodies in a glorified creation. This changes everything about how we view our future and our present. We're not escaping earth; we're inheriting a renewed one. Care for creation, work for justice, build community—these matter eternally. God isn't discarding His creation; He's redeeming it. And you, as His bride, will reign with Him forever in this magnificent kingdom. Live today in light of that eternal reality.