

# Heaven & Hell

## Small Group Series & Study Guide

### **Small Group Guide:**

### **Heaven & Hell, Week 8**

#### **Key Takeaways:**

1. **Hell is not the final destination** - It's a temporary holding place until the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-14).
2. **Two types of death exist:**
  - a. **Nekros** (physical death) - the death of the body.
  - b. **Thanatos** (spiritual death) - separation from God.
3. **The wicked will also be resurrected** - Bodies will reunite with souls for judgment before being cast into the Lake of Fire.
4. **Hell involves multiple forms of suffering:**
  - a. Eternal destruction (losing everything).
  - b. Outer darkness (complete separation from God).
  - c. Weeping (mourning over loss).
  - d. Gnashing of teeth (intense physical pain).
  - e. Flames and torment.

5. **Different degrees of punishment exist** - God is both just and fair (Luke 12:42-48).
6. **Hell was never intended for humans** - It was prepared for the devil and his demons (Matthew 25:41).

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. **Read Revelation 20:11-15 together.** What stands out to you about the Great White Throne Judgment? How does understanding that hell is temporary (before the Lake of Fire) change your perspective?
2. **Discuss the two Greek words for death (nekros and thanatos).** How does understanding spiritual death help explain humanity's need for being "born again"?
3. **Jesus spoke twice as much about hell as He did about heaven.** Why do you think Jesus emphasized this topic so strongly?
4. **How do you reconcile God's love with the reality of hell?** Does understanding that hell was prepared for Satan and his demons (not humans) help with this tension?
5. **Read Luke 12:42-48.** What does the teaching about different degrees of punishment reveal about God's character? How does this demonstrate both His justice and His fairness?
6. **Pastor Allen said, "If you end up in hell, it's not God's fault. It's your own fault."** How would you explain this to someone who says, "A loving God wouldn't send anyone to hell"?

7. **Ask yourself, "Am I doing what God's called me to do, which is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ?"** How does understanding the reality of hell motivate you to share your faith? What holds you back?
8. **Who in your life needs to hear about Jesus?** Take a moment to write down 2-3 names. How can this group pray for and support you in reaching them?
9. **Read Matthew 25:34** - God prepared the kingdom for us from creation. How does knowing God's original intention for humanity affect your understanding of His heart?

### **Practical Application:**

1. **Many people today believe in universalism (everyone goes to heaven) or annihilationism (the wicked cease to exist).** How would you respond to these views based on what Scripture teaches?
2. **Examine Yourself.** Have you made Jesus Lord of your life? If you have any doubts, talk with your group leader or pastor this week.
3. **Share Your Faith.** Pray daily for the people you listed in question #8, and ask God for one opportunity this week to share the hope of Jesus with someone.
  - a. Practice explaining the gospel simply: Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day.
4. **Intercede for Others.** Commit to praying for family members who don't know Jesus, and ask God to send laborers into their lives who will share the gospel.

## Closing Prayer:

1. **Hearts softened** to the reality of eternity.
  2. **Boldness to share the gospel** with those who need Jesus.
  3. **Family members and friends** who don't know Christ.
  4. **Gratitude for God's gift** of salvation through Jesus.
- 

# 5-Day Devotion: The Reality of Eternity

## Day 1: The Two Resurrections

**Reading:** Daniel 12:1-3; John 5:28-29

**Devotional:** Scripture reveals a profound truth: all humanity will experience resurrection—some to eternal life, others to judgment. This reality should transform how we live today. The Old Testament prophet Daniel saw this vision centuries before Christ, confirming God's eternal plan has always included accountability.

Unlike popular belief that death ends everything, the Bible teaches our souls are immortal. This isn't meant to frighten but to awaken us to life's true purpose. Every choice matters because our earthly life determines our eternal destiny. Today, consider: are you living with eternity in mind? The resurrection isn't just doctrine—it's the ultimate reality that gives meaning to every moment we breathe.

## Day 2: God's Original Design

**Reading:** Matthew 25:31-46

**Devotional:** Hell was never God's plan for humanity. Jesus clearly stated that eternal fire was "prepared for the devil and his demons," while the kingdom was "prepared for you from the creation of the world." This reveals God's heart—He designed us for relationship, not judgment. The separation comes not from God's desire but from human rejection of His salvation.

Like a loving father who prepares an inheritance for his children, God has prepared heaven for us. Yet He honors our free will to accept or reject His gift. This truth should fill us with both gratitude and urgency. God's original intent was fellowship, not separation. Today, thank God that His desire is for your salvation, not your destruction.

## Day 3: The Justice and Fairness of God

**Reading:** Luke 12:42-48; Romans 2:1-16

**Devotional:** God's character encompasses both justice and fairness. Justice demands sin be punished and righteousness rewarded. Fairness means punishment fits the crime—not everyone suffers equally. Jesus taught that those who knew God's will but rejected it face severer consequences than those with less knowledge. This reveals God's perfect wisdom. He doesn't treat a hardened rebel the same as someone who never heard the gospel. Yet all are accountable because creation itself testifies to God's existence.

This should motivate us toward two responses: gratitude for God's mercy toward us, and compassion for those who don't know Him. We serve a God who is perfectly just yet remarkably fair in all His dealings.

## Day 4: The Reality of Separation

**Reading:** 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:11-15

**Devotional:** The most devastating aspect of hell isn't physical torment—it's eternal separation from God's presence. Paul describes it as being "forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power." Everything good comes from God's presence: love, joy, peace, hope, purpose.

Separation means losing everything forever—health, relationships, dreams, and most tragically, hope itself. This "eternal destruction" doesn't mean annihilation but the complete loss of everything that makes life meaningful. Jesus called it "outer darkness"—the furthest extreme from God's light. This sobering reality shouldn't paralyze us with fear but motivate us to cherish our relationship with God and urgently share His gospel with others who face this fate.

## Day 5: The Only Way Home

**Reading:** John 14:1-6; Acts 4:8-12

**Devotional:** Jesus made an exclusive claim: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." In our pluralistic age, this sounds narrow. Yet it's actually the most generous offer imaginable—a free gift of salvation available to all who believe. God didn't create multiple complicated paths requiring human achievement. He provided one clear way through Jesus Christ, accessible to everyone regardless of background, education, or past sins. Early Christians were called "followers of the Way" because they understood this truth.

Salvation isn't earned through good works or religious performance—it's received through faith in Christ's finished work. Today, if you haven't accepted this gift, why wait? If you have, who needs to hear about this Way?