

Heaven & Hell

Small Group Series & Study Guide

Small Group Guide:

Heaven & Hell, Week 2

Key Takeaways:

1. Heaven is Temporary, Not Final

- When believers die, they go to an intermediate heaven.
- Our final destination is the New Jerusalem on the new earth.
- We will have physical bodies in a physical place.

2. The Prophetic Timeline

- **Rapture:** Dead in Christ resurrected; living believers caught up (pre-tribulation position).
- **Tribulation:** 7-year period of judgment on earth.
- **Second Coming:** Jesus returns to defeat His enemies.
- **Millennium:** 1,000-year reign of Christ.
- **Great White Throne Judgment:** Final judgment of unbelievers.
- **New Heaven & New Earth:** Our eternal home.

3. Three Purposes of the Tribulation

- To put an end to wickedness and wicked people.
- To bring about a worldwide revival.
- **Primary purpose:** To bring Israel to repentance and acceptance of Jesus as Messiah.

4. The Bride Principle

- As the bride of Christ, we go wherever He is.
- Currently, Jesus sits at the Father's right hand in heaven.
- When believers die, they go to be with Him there.

- When He returns, we return with Him.

Discussion Questions:

1. **What was most surprising or new to you about the prophetic timeline presented in the video?**
2. **Pastor Allen teaches a pre-tribulation rapture position.** What are the implications of believing the rapture is "imminent" (could happen at any time)? How should this affect how we live?
3. **Read Revelation 21:1-5 together.** What specific details stand out to you about the New Jerusalem? What are you most looking forward to about this final destination?
4. **The tribulation serves three purposes.** Which purpose did you find most significant and why?
5. **Why is Israel's repentance and recognition of Jesus as Messiah the prerequisite for Jesus' return to earth?** What does this tell us about God's faithfulness to His promises?
6. **Read Matthew 23:39, Hosea 5:15, and Zechariah 12:10 (assign these to different group members).** How do these verses support the idea that Jesus won't return until Israel calls for Him?
7. **What does it mean practically that we are the "bride of Christ"?** How does understanding this covenant relationship change your perspective on your relationship with Jesus?
8. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:8 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.** How does knowing that "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" bring comfort when facing death or grieving loved ones?

9. **According to Revelation 19:11-14, we return with Jesus at His second coming.** What does it mean that we will be part of the "armies of heaven"?
10. **Read Colossians 3:1.** If Jesus is currently at the Father's right hand in heaven, and that's where believers go when they die, how should this reality affect where we "set our sights" in daily life?
11. **The sermon mentions that during the tribulation, more people will come to Christ than any other time in history.** What does this tell us about God's heart for the lost? How should this impact our evangelistic efforts today?
12. **How does understanding that this earth is not our final home change the way you view:**
 - a. Material possessions?
 - b. Current world events and troubles?
 - c. Your priorities and goals?
 - d. Your relationships?

Practical Application:

1. **Watch and Be Ready.** Since the rapture is imminent, examine your life. Are you living in a state of readiness? Share the gospel with at least one person this week, knowing Jesus could return at any moment.
2. **Study Eschatology.** Research the three main rapture positions (pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib) and understand why you believe what you believe.
3. **Shift Your Focus.** Identify one area where you're too focused on earthly things, and list three ways you can "set your sights on the realities of heaven" this week.

4. **Comfort Others.** If you know someone grieving a Christian loved one, share the truths from this sermon about being "present with the Lord."

Closing Prayer:

- The hope of our final destination in the New Jerusalem.
 - His faithfulness to complete what He has started.
 - The promise that we will be with Him forever.
 - The opportunity to share this hope with others.
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5-Day Devotion: Our Eternal Destination

Day 1: The Promise of Our True Home

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Devotional: Paul reminds us that our earthly bodies are temporary dwelling places. As believers, we are confident that when we are absent from these bodies, we are present with the Lord. This truth transforms how we view death—not as an ending, but as going home to be with our Bridegroom. Our citizenship is in heaven, and this earth is not our final destination. When struggles overwhelm you, remember that you are merely passing through. Set your heart on eternal realities, not temporary circumstances. This perspective doesn't diminish earthly life but infuses it with purpose, knowing every moment draws us closer to our ultimate home with Christ.

Day 2: The Bridegroom and His Bride

Reading: Ephesians 5:25-32; Revelation 19:7-9

Devotional: The marriage covenant between Christ and His Church is the most intimate picture of our relationship with Jesus. Just as a bride goes wherever her bridegroom is, we are eternally united with Christ. This covenant relationship means we are never separated from His love. When Jesus ascended to heaven, He prepared a place for us. At the rapture, He will come for His bride, and we will be with Him forever. This isn't merely theological concept—it's personal relationship. You are loved, chosen, and cherished by the King of Kings. Live today knowing you belong to Him completely, and He will never leave you nor forsake you.

Day 3: Living with Eternal Perspective

Reading: Colossians 3:1-4; Philippians 3:20-21

Devotional: Since we have been raised to new life with Christ, we are called to set our minds on heavenly realities. This doesn't mean we become so heavenly minded that we're no earthly good. Rather, eternal perspective empowers us to live purposefully now. Christ sits at the Father's right hand, and our life is hidden with Him. When He appears, we will appear with Him in glory. This truth should transform your daily priorities. What consumes your thoughts? What drives your decisions? When you grasp that this world is not your final home, you're freed from the tyranny of temporary things. Invest in what lasts forever—relationships, character, and God's kingdom work.

Day 4: Hope During Tribulation

Reading: Romans 8:18-25; Revelation 21:1-5

Devotional: Creation groans, waiting for redemption's completion. While believers are spared from God's wrath during the tribulation, we live in a fallen world that experiences suffering. Yet our present troubles are nothing compared to the glory that awaits us. God is making all things new. One day, He will wipe away every tear, eliminate death, sorrow, crying, and pain forever. The New Jerusalem will descend, and God will dwell among His people on a new earth—heaven on earth. This hope sustains us through present trials. Your suffering is not meaningless; it's temporary. Hold fast to the promise that God is working all things together for good and preparing an eternal weight of glory beyond comparison.

Day 5: Ready and Watching

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; Matthew 24:36-44

Devotional: The rapture is imminent—it could happen at any moment. Jesus commanded us to watch and be ready because we don't know the day or hour of His return. This isn't meant to create anxiety but anticipation. Are you living as though Christ could return today? The doctrine of imminence should purify our lives, intensify our witness, and deepen our devotion. Don't be caught unprepared like those who will face the tribulation. Instead, encourage one another with these words: Jesus is coming for His bride. Live with urgency, share the gospel boldly, and keep your eyes fixed on the eastern sky. Your redemption draws near, and the best is yet to come.