

Heaven & Hell

Small Group Series & Study Guide

Small Group Guide:

Heaven & Hell, Week 6

Key Takeaways:

1. **Heaven is a Real, Physical City:** Not an ethereal or imaginary place, but an actual city with walls, streets, and structures made from material substances.
2. **Heaven is Currently in the Heavenly Realm:** The New Jerusalem exists now in heaven and will descend to the new earth after the millennium and final judgment.
3. **The City Reflects God's Glory:** Everything in heaven is specifically designed to reflect and magnify God's glory, from the jasper walls to the transparent gold streets.
4. **Heaven is Inclusive:** With gates on all four sides bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and foundations bearing the names of the twelve apostles, heaven welcomes both Old and New Testament believers.
5. **Heaven is Spacious Beyond Imagination:** The city is approximately 1,400-1,500 miles in length, width, and

height - more than sufficient for all the redeemed throughout history.

Discussion Questions:

1. **What surprised you most about the physical description of heaven?** How does this challenge or confirm your previous understanding of what heaven will be like?
2. **Why do you think God chose to make heaven a city rather than some other form?** What does this reveal about God's character and His plans for us?
3. **Pastor Allen mentioned that Abraham "was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations" (Hebrews 11:10).** What does this tell us about faith and hope in the Old Testament?
4. **Pastor Allen mentioned that people who have near-death experiences never actually made it to the city of heaven.** How does understanding heaven as a real, physical place affect your view of these testimonies?
5. **Everything in heaven is designed to reflect God's glory.** In what ways can we reflect God's glory in our daily lives right now?
6. **Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2-3).** How does knowing Jesus is personally preparing a place for you impact your relationship with Him?
7. **The city has twelve gates with the names of Israel's tribes and twelve foundations with the apostles' names.** What does this unity between Old and New

Testament believers teach us about God's plan of salvation?

8. **Revelation 21:3** says, "**God's home is now among His people.**" How should the promise of God's permanent presence with us change how we live today?

Practical Application:

1. **Pastor Allen emphasized that heaven's gates are open to "anyone and everyone who accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior," regardless of where they come from.** Who in your life needs to hear this message? How can you share it with them?
2. **During the millennium, believers may live in heaven and work on earth.** How does this picture of active service in God's kingdom challenge any ideas of heaven being boring or inactive?

Closing Prayer:

- **Thank God** for the specific, tangible hope of heaven.
- **Pray for those** who don't yet know Jesus and won't be part of the New Jerusalem.
- **Ask God** to help you live with an eternal perspective.
- **Thank Jesus** for personally preparing a place for you in His Father's house.

5-Day Devotion: Heaven is Real and Physical

Day 1: Heaven Is Real and Physical

Reading: Hebrews 11:8-16

Devotional: Abraham looked forward to a city with eternal foundations, designed and built by God. Like Abraham, we often struggle to comprehend heaven's reality. The New Jerusalem is not an ethereal dream but an actual city with walls, streets, and mansions. God has prepared a tangible place for those who love Him. This truth should transform how we live today.

When we understand that heaven is as real as the ground beneath our feet, our earthly struggles gain proper perspective. We are not hoping for some vague spiritual existence but anticipating a concrete, magnificent home in God's presence. Let this reality anchor your faith today, knowing that what awaits you is more solid and permanent than anything in this temporary world.

Day 2: God's Home Among His People

Reading: Revelation 21:1-7

Devotional: The most stunning feature of the New Jerusalem is not its size or splendor, but that it represents God's home among His people. Throughout Scripture, God has desired to dwell with humanity—from Eden's garden to the tabernacle, from the temple to Christ's incarnation. The New Jerusalem is the culmination of this divine longing. God Himself will live with us, and we will be His people.

Every material in this city is chosen specifically to reflect His glory. Without God's presence, even the most magnificent city would be dark and lifeless. Today, remember that God desires intimate fellowship with you. He is not distant or disinterested. The same God who will dwell with you eternally wants to walk with you now through His Spirit.

Day 3: Access for All Who Believe

Reading: John 14:1-6; Revelation 21:12-13

Devotional: The New Jerusalem has twelve gates—three on each side—symbolizing that heaven's doors are open to everyone who accepts Jesus Christ. It does not matter where you come from geographically, culturally, or socially. North, south, east, or west—access is available from every direction. The gates bear the names of Israel's twelve tribes, reminding us that salvation came through the Jewish people and ultimately through Jesus, the Jewish Messiah. Yet the foundations bear the apostles' names, representing the church. This unity of Old and New Testament believers demonstrates God's inclusive plan of redemption. Today, share this good news with someone who feels too far from God. No one is beyond the reach of His grace. The gates are open wide.

Day 4: More Than Enough Room

Reading: John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:15-17

Devotional: When Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions," He was not exaggerating. The New Jerusalem measures approximately 1,400 miles in each direction—a perfect cube. This city can accommodate every believer who has ever lived with room to spare. God is not cramped for space or resources. He has prepared abundantly for His children. This extravagant provision reflects His generous character. He does not give sparingly or reluctantly.

Consider how this applies to your life today. If God has prepared such abundance for eternity, will He not also provide for your current needs? Trust His generous heart. He who prepared mansions in heaven cares about every detail of your earthly journey. There is more than enough room in His heart and His home for you.

Day 5: Living in God's Glory

Reading: Revelation 21:22-27; 22:1-5

Devotional: The New Jerusalem needs no sun or moon because God's glory illuminates everything. The city is made of gold so pure it is transparent, allowing God's light to shine through unhindered. This is the ultimate purpose of creation—that God's glory would be displayed and enjoyed forever. In this city, there is no temple because God Himself is the temple. No barriers separate us from His presence. We will see His face and serve Him joyfully. This eternal reality should shape how we live today.

Are you allowing God's glory to shine through your life, or are there impurities blocking His light? Like transparent gold, we are called to be pure vessels reflecting His presence. Surrender anything that obscures His glory in your life. One day, you will live forever in unhindered fellowship with the God who loves you infinitely.