

# STANDING ON THE EDGE OF ETERNITY

A STUDY ON LIFE, DEATH, HEAVEN, AND HELL



WEST MAIN CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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# Introduction

We are all standing on the Edge of Eternity. By that I mean that one day we will die. Death is a fact of life. Yet, it is one that many like to ignore. We can't be naïve about it. One day we will die. Then we will begin a great journey unlike any other we have ever experienced. I love taking trips! I loved being able to travel to Africa, Germany, Mexico, Canada, Jamaica, Israel, and to a number of states. But the journey all of us will one day experience will truly be unique. It will be the ultimate trip.

When we die, we will leave this physical realm and enter into a spiritual realm. Companies like Uber, Southwest, or Amtrak will not get us to this destination. Rather, the angels will usher the faithful into this journey, [Luke 16:19-22](#). It will be the ultimate setting of sails.

In this class, we will be studying what the Bible has to say about heaven and hell. As I thought about this subject, I began considering other aspects that need to be discussed outside of the final destination places of heaven and hell. I thought about our lives now, how we live with a view toward eternity, salvation, preparing for death, what happens after we die, and what the day of judgment will look and be like. I also searched to see what kind of workbooks are available concerning heaven and hell. I didn't find much. I texted preachers to see what they had put together and came back with the same responses: "Not Much." One of the preachers said to me, "The more I study about heaven, the less I know." While we talk about heaven and hell in sermons or in a Bible class, I've never had a class dealing with this subject. So, this quarter will be an adventure for all of us.

We read about heaven, hell, being with Christ, and eternity in the scriptures.

"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels...These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'" [Matthew 25:41, 46](#)

"If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell." [Matthew 5:30](#)

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

[John 14:1-3](#)

“And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.’” Acts 1:9-11

“For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.” Philippians 1:21-23

“And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” Luke 23:42-43

“For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed – for our testimony to you was believed.” 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

There are plenty of other passages that speak on this subject. It makes sense for us to discuss the subject of eternity, because all of us are going to experience it someday. There are many questions people have with respect to heaven and hell.

When it comes to heaven, what are questions you or others have had? List them below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

When it comes to hell, what are questions you or others have had? List them below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

We will spend 13 weeks discussing “Standing on the Edge of Eternity.” My hope and prayer is that as we study our faith in Christ will grow, we will have the proper view of death, and an earnest expectation of what is to come. I like what the Hebrews writer says in Hebrews 9:27-28.

“And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.”





# Lesson 1: The Facts of Life

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## ***Introduction***

Something happened to me back in 2014 that reminded me of a simple fact of life. One day I will die. I already know this to be true, but what happened just reinforced how fragile life really is. On June 17, 2014, I had my day planned. Everything was working according to plan. I helped a family move and load up their U-Haul truck. We then went out for lunch. Later in the day, I went to the gym. I was supposed to have a Bible study that evening, but the study never happened. I never finished my workout either. While I was on the treadmill jogging, I began to have intense pain in my teeth and face. I began to sweat profusely and experienced fatigue. It felt like I was having a heart attack. I would find out the next day I didn't have a heart attack, but rather a blood clot in my right coronary artery. I was thankful to be alive. Being 36 at the time, I never imagined having something like this happen. I have some heart issues already, but this was unexpected.

After this event, I began to ask myself a number of questions:

- How much more time do I have?
- What will happen to my wife and son?
- What about my work as a preacher?

I also began to think about something else. The book of Ecclesiastes. My mind went to this book because it's a book about LIFE. Before we look at some passages, what are some specific thoughts Solomon shares with us concerning life? Write down your thoughts below.

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As I went through my health crisis, I was reminded by Solomon about some facts of life. As we think about heaven and hell, we need to consider these facts of life. Before we can dive into what heaven and hell will be like, we first need to talk about DEATH. Death is not a popular subject.

We all know we are going to die, but it often makes us uncomfortable. Let's see what we need to know from Solomon regarding this fact of life.

***The Lesson***

1. Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-4. How does Solomon begin his book? What can we learn about life?

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2. Throughout the book, Solomon discusses life. A part of the discussion about life is the reality of death. Let's consider some sobering thoughts. Read the following passages and be ready to discuss them during our time in class together:

- Ecclesiastes 2:12-16
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
- Ecclesiastes 9:1-12
- Ecclesiastes 11:9-10
- Ecclesiastes 12:1-7

Thought #1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Thought #2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Thought #3: \_\_\_\_\_

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Thought #4: \_\_\_\_\_

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Thought #5: \_\_\_\_\_

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From the beginning, as a result of sin, death is something we will all experience unless we're alive at the return of Christ. Maybe the bigger question we all need to consider is how will we respond to this reality? There are a couple of ways people can respond to this fact of life.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

How does God want us to respond to this reality? Read the following passages to help answer:

- Ecclesiastes 12:13; 1 Peter 2:11-14; Philippians 3:20-21; Titus 2:11-14

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Conclusion***

Let's live like we're dying!



## Lesson 2: Death: The King of Terrors

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### ***Introduction***

What is it that terrifies you? Is it a haunted house? Maybe a scary movie? Or is it tax season! For many, public speaking is one of the great terrors of life. While these things may terrify people, there's one thing that could be described as the king of terrors: DEATH.

Listen to what King David said in Psalm 55:1-4:

“Give ear to my prayer, O God; And do not hide Yourself from my supplication. Give heed to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted, because of the voice of the enemy, because of the pressure of the wicked; for they bring down trouble upon me and in anger they bear a grudge against me. My heart is in anguish within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me.”

Listen to what Job's friend Bildad said in Job 18:14:

“He is torn from the security of his tent, and they march him before the king of terrors.”

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.” Hebrews 2:14-15

What about you? How do you view death? Is it the king of terrors for you? Unless we are alive when Jesus returns, we must face death. The subject of death often makes us uncomfortable. There aren't typically in-depth discussions on Facebook about death. It's not a topic that's discussed as parents take their children to school. In our culture, many go through the mourning process of losing a loved one as quickly as possible, because thinking about death makes people feel uncomfortable. Death is described as an enemy, 1 Corinthians 15:26. Whether we like it or not, death is a fact of life.

In this lesson, I want us to consider what it is that causes man to fear death so much. We will also discuss the confidence we should have as Christians facing death.

## ***The Lesson***

1. Read the following passages below and see what you learn about death and why many fear it. We will discuss more in-depth during class. Use the space below to write out thoughts you may have.

- Genesis 5:5-20
- Acts 24:24-27
- Hebrews 9:27
- James 4:13-15

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2. Why Many Fear Death: (Fill this section in during class).

***Reason #1:*** \_\_\_\_\_

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***Reason #2:*** \_\_\_\_\_

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***Reason #3:*** \_\_\_\_\_

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***Reason #4:*** \_\_\_\_\_

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While many fear death, we don't have to.

- Read Acts 21:11-14. What was the mindset Paul had facing persecution?
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- Read 2 Peter 1:14-15. What was the mindset Peter had as he spoke about his death?
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- Read Acts 7:54-58. What was the mindset Stephen had facing death?
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3. Read the following passages below and see what you learn about the confidence we can have as we face death. We will discuss more in-depth during class. Use the space below to write out thoughts you may have.

- Revelation 14:13
- Revelation 1:18
- Matthew 22:31-32
- 1 Thessalonians 4:12-18
- Philippians 3:20-21
- 2 Corinthians 5:1-8
- Philippians 1:21-23

4. The Christians view of death: (Fill this section in during class)

**Reason #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Reason #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

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*Reason #3:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Reason #4:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion**

It's been said that death is a representative of all human woes. There's sadness, bitterness, and hopelessness that surround death. There are terrible forms of dying. There's a lasting separation that death causes between loved ones. While death is often difficult to comprehend and understand, the child of God can take comfort facing death confidently. We are all on the edge of eternity. Let's stay ready.



## Lesson 3: Do You Believe in Eternity?

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### **Introduction**

The book of Job is one of the most intense books in the Bible. We see a great man who had it all, Job 1:1-5. But in a short amount of time he would lose virtually everything, Job 1:6-22; Job 2:1-13. What ensues after all of these tragic events is Job trying to sort through his pain, his questions, and his doubts. In Job 14, we hear from this righteous man during his dark days. In Job 14:14, he asked a question many have asked.

“If a man dies, will he live again?”

Have you ever asked that question? Have you heard others ask this question? This has been a popular question for generations. Here’s the good news! Jesus has answered this question for us. Read John 11:25-26 and write out below what Jesus said in that verse.

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While we can read what Jesus said, there’s another question we need to consider. Do we really believe it? In this lesson, we will discuss why can believe in ETERNITY! We have already discussed the reality of death. It will happen to us. Now, we need to begin considering the reality of eternity! Death is not the end. It’s only the beginning. Let’s consider three thoughts as to why we should believe in eternity.

### **The Lesson**

1. Read Matthew 17:1-3. Who do we find in this passage interacting with Jesus and what does it teach concerning life and death?

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2. Read John 11:1-45. What major event happened and what people do we read about?

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3. What does this event and the teaching of Jesus help us to learn concerning life after death?

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**Reason #1:** (Fill in during class) \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Read the following passages concerning Jesus and His nature. What do they help us to learn about Him and our topic of eternity?

- Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-6
- John 6:47-58
- Matthew 20:17-19
- Romans 1:4
- 1 John 5:11

**Reason #2:** (Fill in during class) \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Read the following scriptures and take note of what they teach. What do they teach concerning eternal life?

- Hebrews 6:11-20
- 1 John 2:25
- Mark 10:28-30
- John 5:39
- John 6:68
- John 10:27-28
- John 12:25

- John 17:1-2
- Romans 2:4-10

*Reason #3:* (Fill in during class) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Heaven is for real. So is hell. One day we will spend eternity in either heaven or hell, Mark 9:40-43; Matthew 23:33.

***Conclusion***

We can really live forever with our Savior. Let us live with a view toward heaven with our Savior.



## Lesson 4: Reaching the Goal of Heaven

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### ***Introduction***

The book of Hebrews can often be neglected. Not because it's not important (it is). There are probably other books that may get more attention. Books like Acts, the Gospels, Revelation, and Romans. We certainly need to read those books. They are all inspired by God. Yet, the book of Hebrews is a very powerful book. The author reminded his audience about the superiority of Christ. He is far greater and superior than the angels, the great prophet Moses, the former priests of old, and He has established a better covenant with better promises, [Hebrews 8:6](#). These Christians were reminded of these powerful points because they were in danger of falling away:

- There was the danger of them neglecting their faith, [Hebrews 2:1-4](#).
- There was the danger of them having an unbelieving heart, [Hebrews 3:7-13](#).
- They had become dull of hearing, [Hebrews 5:11-14](#).
- They needed to be reminded about what was at stake, [Hebrews 6:4-6](#); [Hebrews 10:26-29](#).
- Some had formed terrible habits like forsaking the assembly, [Hebrews 10:25](#).
- They needed to run and finish their race, [Hebrews 12:1-3](#).

Eternity was on the line for them and it's on the line for us. As we think about heaven, we need to also remember what it will take for us to get there one day. It can seem very challenging thinking about the goal of heaven. It seems so far away. Is it really possible to get there? In order for us to make it, we will need to have the proper focus and perspective. In this lesson, we will examine what will need to make this goal a reality! As we think about heaven, there are some questions we will need to answer along the way. Let's consider four of them.

**The Lesson**

1. *QUESTION #1: What will we need to reach this goal?* Read the following passages and identify what we need if heaven is to be our home:

- Ephesians 2:1-10
- Acts 2:21-38
- Psalm 119:105

List what you have identified from these passages.

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2. *QUESTION #2: What help might we need along the way?* Read the following passages and identify what assistance we will need along the way:

- Hebrews 3:12-14
- Acts 2:42-46
- Acts 9:18-19, 26
- Philippians 1:1
- James 5:16
- Galatians 6:1-2

List what you have identified from these passages.

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3. **QUESTION #3: How long will this goal take to accomplish?** Read the following passages and identify what they teach that will help answer this question:

- 2 Timothy 4:6-8
- Hebrews 10:32-39
- Hebrews 12:1-3
- 2 Timothy 2:1-10

List what you have identified from these passages to help answer this question.

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4. **QUESTION #4: Why do you want this goal?** What are some common reasons as to why people say they want to go to heaven? List them below.

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If someone were to ask you why you want to go to heaven, how would you answer? Write your thoughts below.

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### **Conclusion**

With any goal, there must be an honest evaluation, 2 Corinthians 13:5. How often are we examining our faith, receiving assistance from others, and making corrections?





## Lesson 5: I'm Going to Heaven, But What About Now?

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### ***Introduction***

The very thought of heaven should be motivation for us to stay focused on our King. Heaven is going to be amazing. In 2 Timothy 4:6-8, the apostle Paul realized that his journey was about up. He had great expectation of what was to come next. Here's what he said.

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

From this passage, we can see some thoughts we have already discussed. For example:

- Paul said, “The time of my departure has come.” He realized he was going to die.
- Paul also said, “In the future there is laid up for me the crown...” He realized heaven is for real. Eternity is for real.
- I want to focus on something else Paul said. He also said, “I fought the good fight...” Paul spoke about his life. He knew he was going to heaven, but he still had to live. He still had to fight.

The same is true for us. We know we can go to heaven and be with our Father and His Son Jesus. But what about now? What about the daily steps we have to take? We've discussed this a little in our last lesson about the help we will need along the way. In this lesson, I want us to consider the mindset a Christian is to have as we wait for the return of our King.

**The Lesson**

Since Jesus ascended back to heaven (Acts 1:9-11), Christians have been waiting for His return ever since.

Read Acts 1:9-11. What do we learn about the return of Christ?

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Read 2 Peter 3:10. What can we learn regarding the return of our Savior? \_\_\_\_\_

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As we think about our future home in heaven, we also need to be thinking about our conduct now. There is a certain way we are to conduct ourselves. One could say we are on the *WAIT WATCHERS PLAN*, 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10.

We are to be waiting and watching for His return. Let’s consider a few passages.

1. Go back and read all of 2 Peter 3. What struggles were the Christians facing from non-Christians?

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2. What challenges might we face as we wait for the return of Jesus?

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3. Since we know Jesus will return one day, what is to be our mindset?

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4. Read Titus 2:11-14; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:17. What can we learn from Paul and Peter about what our conduct and behavior is to look like as we wait for Jesus to return?

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5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-11. As we wait for Christ to return, what's a big thing we should be focusing on? Note verse 11. You may also want to consider other passages like Colossians 4:2-6.

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6. Read Philippians 3:20. How might it be challenging to eagerly wait for our Savior?

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7. As we think about our crown of life and waiting for the return of our Savior, let's go back to the apostle Paul. Write out some of the challenges and difficulties Paul experienced as he fought the good fight. Provide verses as well.

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### ***Conclusion***

We are to WAIT, and we are to WATCH. Heaven can and will be our home. Let's be sure we are ready to be called home. It could be today.



# Lesson 6: What Happens after We Die?

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## ***Introduction***

In the book of Job, we find a man who has to endure intense suffering. He doesn't have all of the answers. Job is simply trying to hang out. The book of Job is a great book to read when you're trying to figure out what to do when there's nothing you can do. It's also a great book when it comes to learning about the spiritual realm. The book of Job pulls the curtain back on spiritual warfare. Job's friends believed he was suffering because he had done wrong, [Job 4:7-9](#). Job felt like God was attacking him, [Job 6:4](#). But we know the rest of the story. We are given the chance to peek behind the curtain to see the spiritual battle taking place behind the scenes:

- Satan was involved with all of the sufferings Job endured, [Job 1-2](#).
- We learn how Satan was seeking to destroy Job and to get him to curse God, [Job 1-2](#).
- We are reminded how Satan is truly our enemy, [1 Peter 5:8](#).

There are other occasions in the scriptures where the curtain is pulled back and we are able to see a glimpse of what's going on in the spiritual realm. Another case is found in [2 Kings 6:8-18](#), where Elisha prayed for his servant's eyes to be opened. In [Numbers 22:1-21](#), we find Balak, after seeing what God had done for the Israelites against the Amorites, sought to defeat them. As king of the Moabites, he sent messengers to Balaam, to see if he might curse God's people. What's interesting about this story is that while Balak and Balaam had this conversation, it appears the people of God had no idea this was taking place. From this short sample of scriptures, we can learn how there are many things taking place behind the scenes. The Holy Spirit, however, has not revealed everything to us about the spirit realm and what's going on, [Deuteronomy 29:29](#).

I'm saying this because people often have questions about what happens after one dies. What does it look like? What will it feel like as one enters the spiritual realm? There are many claims people make. Many make the claim of dying and returning to tell others what happened. This contradicts scripture.

What does James 2:26 say? \_\_\_\_\_

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While Lazarus and others were raised from the dead, no revelation is given about what they experienced.

As we have already discussed, death can be scary because we have not experienced it. There's no trial run. No one has come back to tell us all of the details surrounding it. This raises a number of questions. In this lesson, we will seek to see what has been revealed in the scriptures about what happens after we die. We must be content with what the Holy Spirit has revealed to us.

### ***The Lesson***

1. We have already discussed death, but let's go back and consider a few more thoughts:

- God doesn't want us to be ignorant about this topic, 1 Corinthians 15:34-38.
- Death will come for all, Hebrews 9:27.
- "From a physical vantage point, death is the cessation of the biological functions of the body, with a subsequent disintegration of the flesh back to the dust of the earth whence it came originally." Genesis 2:7, 3:19; Ecclesiastes 12:7, 2 Corinthians 5:1. We will be absent from our bodies, but we will still be somewhere else, 2 Corinthians 5:8.
- The doctrine of *reincarnation (rebirth of the soul in another body)* is not found in the scriptures.
- In the scriptures, sometimes death is described with the word *sleep*. An example of this is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 where it says:

"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep."

- This expression *fallen asleep* is referring to the state of the body.
- This is not saying one's soul is sleep.
- Therefore, the doctrine of *soul sleeping* is false. Soul sleeping is the idea that when a person dies, their soul sleeps until the future of the time of the resurrection.

- When a person dies, there is a release of that person’s spirit from their body, James 2:26; Genesis 35:18.
- The Bible does not teach the soul is totally annihilated as some religious groups advocate. This misunderstanding comes from a misinterpretation of Ecclesiastes 9:5 and Ecclesiastes 12:7.
- There is a state or sphere of consciousness after one dies. Let’s consider this in more detail. One of the biggest passages that will help us with this question comes from Luke 16:19-31.

2. Let’s read and see what we learn about what happens after we die, Luke 16:19-31.

Verse 19: Who is introduced? \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 20–21: Who is next introduced? \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 22: “Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.”

- What happened to the poor man (Lazarus)?

\_\_\_\_\_

- Who is said to have carried him away?

\_\_\_\_\_

- Where was he taken?

\_\_\_\_\_

- What is said of the rich man?

\_\_\_\_\_

- What happened to the rich man?

\_\_\_\_\_

Verse 22–26: These verses now take us into a discussion of the Hadean realm. Let’s address some questions that should help us to obtain a better understanding of Hades.

### Question #1: What Is the Meaning of the Word *Hades*?

- This word comes directly from the Greek into English.
- It is found 11 times in the New Testament.
- W.E. Vine noted that some derive the term from the negative prefix *a* (“not”) and *eido* (“seen”), hence the “unseen” though he felt the more likely possibility is that it comes from *hado*, signifying “all receiving.”
- Hades is the generic name for the intermediate state of the dead (i.e., the receptacle of the soul), whether pertaining to the righteous or the wicked.
  - In the KJV, it is rendered “hell” but this is incorrect, Luke 16:23; Acts 2:27.
  - Jesus did not go to “hell” (Gehenna; the place of eternal punishment as seen in Mark 9:43).
  - The word *Hades* is used in Acts 2:27 referring to Jesus. What is the Old Testament word that’s used to refer to this in Psalms 16:10?

### Question #2: How Many Parts Are There in the Hadean Realm?

Consider the story in Luke 16:19-31 to answer this question:

- What are these places called?
- Where do the saved go in the Hadean realm?
- Where do the unsaved go in the Hadean realm?

### Question #3: Did Jesus Go into the Hadean Realm When He Died?

- Read Psalms 16:8-11 and Acts 2:22-28, 31.
- Read Luke 23:43.

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*Question #4: Doesn't Hades Mean We Are Already Judged?*

- Read 2 Peter 2:8-9.
- Read 2 Timothy 4:1.
- Read Revelation 20:13-14.

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*Question #5: Is There Consciousness for Those in Hades?*

- How does Luke 16:19-31 help us with this question?

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*Question #6: What Else Do We Learn about the Hadean World from Luke 16:19-31?*

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**Conclusion**

God has provided us some details about what happens when we die. As we stand on the edge of eternity, let's be sure that we continue to stand with our Savior, 1 Corinthians 15:58.



# Lesson 7: The Return of Jesus

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## ***Introduction***

The return of Jesus Christ from heaven continues to be a topic, not only of interest, but also of speculation and conjecture. There are a variety of dispositions that men have about His coming:

- *The confused:* They are uncertain about what to believe, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2.
- *The castigators:* They publicly ridicule the very concept of the Lord's return, 2 Peter 3:3-4.
- *The casual:* They take a so-what view and go about their own activities, Matthew 24:38-39.
- *The curious:* These may be interested, but only as a matter of curiosity, Acts 17:20-21.
- *The concerned:* These may be worried, but do nothing about it, Acts 24:25.
- *The convicted:* This is where we ought to be—convicted and ready, 2 Peter 3:1-11.

Rather than speculate, as do some, we make our appeal to the inspired scriptures, 2 Peter 3:1-2. Peter's words were written in a context that addressed the Lord's return. Listen to the written word! In this lesson, we will seek to answer popular questions people have (including ourselves) about the return of Christ. This study is important as we think about eternity, heaven, and hell.

## ***The Lesson***

### **Question #1: Can We Be Sure That Jesus Will Return?**

Consider the following passages and write down what we learn from them about the certainty of His return. You may also want to read some of the surrounding context of these passages. Can you identify other passages that help us to answer this question?

- Acts 1:9-11
  - John 14:1-3
  - Hebrews 9:27-28
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### **Question #2: Will His Return Be Literal and Actual?**

Consider the following passages and write down what we learn from them. You may also want to read some of the surrounding context of these passages. Can you identify other passages that help us to answer this question?

- Acts 1:9-11
  - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
  - 1 John 3:1-2
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### **Question #3: How Will We Know When It Happens?**

Consider the following passages and write down what we learn from them. You may also want to read some of the surrounding context of these passages. Can you identify other passages that help us to answer this question?

- Acts 1:9-11
  - Revelation 1:7
  - 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17
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### **Question #4: What Will Happen to the Dead at His Return?**

Consider the following passages and write down what we learn from them. You may also want to read some of the surrounding context of these passages. Can you identify other passages that help us to answer this question?

- John 5:28-29
  - 2 Timothy 4:1
  - 1 Corinthians 15:42, 52
  - Acts 24:15
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### **Question #5: What Will Happen to the Living at His Return?**

Consider the following passages and write down what we learn from them. You may also want to read some of the surrounding context of these passages. Can you identify other passages that help us to answer this question?

- 2 Timothy 4:1
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-54

- 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18
- 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

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**Question #6: What Will Happen to the Earth at His Return?**

Consider the following passages and write down what we learn from them. You may also want to read some of the surrounding context of these passages. Can you identify other passages that help us to answer this question?

- 2 Peter 3:10-12

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**Question #7: Will Men Get a Second Chance at His Return?**

Consider the following passages and written down what we learn from them. You may also want to read some of the surrounding context of these passages. Can you identify other passages that help us to answer this question?

- 2 Corinthians 5:10

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**Question #8: What about Armageddon?**

The topic of Armageddon often comes up when speaking about the return of Jesus. What have you heard of Armageddon? Where is this term found in the scripture?

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## ***Conclusion***

At the coming of the Lord, the souls of men in Hades will be reunited with their bodies and all men will stand before God in judgment. At that time, men will go to heaven or to hell. The key issue for us is whether or not we are ready at His return. At His return, there are no more opportunities to be saved. At our deaths, there are no more opportunities to be saved. He wants us to know Him and do His will. Have you done what Jesus wants you to do?





## Lesson 8: Questions about Hell (Gehenna)

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### **Introduction**

It's been almost 2,000 years since the last words of the Bible were penned by the Apostle John. Yet, some of the Bible's teaching continue to this very day to be controversial. No doctrine in scripture is challenged more than the Bible's teaching on eternal punishment. While millions of people believe what the Bible says about hell, millions also deny it. Why do people deny hell? How would you answer this question?

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In this lesson, we will seek to answer questions people often have about hell. We will seek to establish some facts we need to know. Then we will seek to answer objections people sometimes have about hell. *Gehenna* is the word Jesus used when He wanted to describe the place of eternal punishment. In [Mark 9:43-48](#), Jesus said:

“If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

We will answer these questions by going to scripture. Our opinions, feelings, emotions, and what we would like are not authoritative.

### **The Lesson**

#### **Question #1: How Is Gehenna Distinguished from Hades?**

Think back and even go back to our lesson we did called, “What happens after we die.” Answer these questions:

- Is Hades eternal in nature or temporary?
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- Are there righteous souls in Hades? Will there be righteous souls in hell (Gehenna)?
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- Did Jesus go to the Hadean realm or to hell (Gehenna) when He died?
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- A distinction must be made between Hades and hell (Gehenna).
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## **Question #2: What Is the Origin of the Word Gehenna?**

The following is taken from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*:

- Gehenna literally means “Valley of Hinnom.”
  - The word derives from the Hebrew, the Valley of Hinnom, or more fully, the Valley of the son (s) of Hinnom, situated to the S or the SW of Jerusalem.
  - It is first referred to in Joshua 15:8 and Joshua 18:16 as marking the boundary between the inheritance of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.
  - During the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh, at Topheth (prob. Lit “fire-place”) in the Valley of Hinnom, human sacrifices were offered to the heathen god Molech, 2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6.
  - Josiah in his reforms defiled Topheth, preventing any further use of the valley for that purpose, 2 Kings 23:10.
  - In Jeremiah 7:30-33, it’s announced that the name of the valley will be changed to the “Valley of Slaughter” because when the Lord judged Judah for her sins, the number of dead would be so great that they would be thrown into the valley to lie there without burial.
  - In later times, the valley seems to have been used for burning refuse and also the bodies of criminals. From about the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., the Valley of Hinnom came to be thought of as the place of final punishment for the enemies of God.
  - This arose either from the earlier associations, from Jeremiah’s prophecy, or from the later practice just referred to. This is seen in scriptures like Isaiah 30:33 and 66:24.

- In later thought, Gehenna was thought of as the eschatological fire of hell, still probably considered as a place (especially in Rabbinic thought), but now no longer locally outside Jerusalem. The term is used in the New Testament in this sense.
- J. Jeremias stresses the sharp distinction in the New Testament (as in pre-NT Judaism) between Hades and Gehenna: Hades receiving the ungodly only for the intervening period between death and resurrection; Gehenna being their place of punishment after the last judgment. Apart from James 3:6, where the tongue, compared to a fire that sets on fire the whole cycle of nature, is said to be itself on fire by Gehenna, the remaining occurrences are all in the synoptic gospels:
  - Matthew 5:22
  - Matthew 5:29
  - Matthew 10:28
  - Matthew 18:8-9
  - Matthew 23:15
  - Matthew 23:33
  - Mark 9:42-47
  - Luke 12:5
- The other New Testament writings, although not using the word *Gehenna* use equivalent expressions—of judgment, wrath, fire, destruction, perdition, the lake of fire.
- There is evidence among the rabbis, both those of the strict school of Shammai and the more liberal school of Hillel, of beliefs that consignment to Gehenna will either result in annihilation or will be purgatorial, and therefore will be ultimately followed by blessedness. THESE BELIEFS ARE NOT EXPLICIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. They also contradict passages expressing that those sent to hell will be there forever.

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**Question #3: Isn't Hell Something Preachers Made Up?**

- How you would answer this question? Why do some think this to be the case?

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- What did Jesus say about hell?

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**Question #4: Isn't Hell Just a Figure of Speech—a Metaphor?**

- How would you answer that question?

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- Go back and read the references back in question 2, where Jesus spoke about hell. What can we learn about the reality of hell?

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**Question #5: Isn't Punishment in Hell over in a Moment?**

- From the passages we have already discussed, how would you answer this question?

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- Also consider 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 and Matthew 25:46.

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**Question #6: How Could a Just God Send Anyone to Hell?**

- How would you answer this question, if someone asked you?

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- Consider the following passages:

- Habakkuk 1:13
- Isaiah 6:1-4
- 1 John 4:8
- Genesis 18:25
- Psalm 89:14
- Psalm 145:9
- Acts 13:46

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**Question #7: Maybe Only the Really Wicked Go to Hell?**

- How would you answer this question?

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- Consider the following passages:

- Matthew 7:21-23
- Matthew 23:15, 33

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### ***Conclusion***

What does all this mean? It means there truly is a place of eternal punishment where disobedient men go at the Judgment Day. All the vain reasoning we may engage in to deny the reality of the place doesn't change anything. The truth about hell is still there. The question can be asked, "Do you like the idea of hell?" Of course not. Nobody does. No sinner likes the thought of eternal punishment. That's why men work so hard to try to deny it. But denying it does not eliminate the reality of it. God wants you to go to heaven. Jesus will not force anyone to go to heaven if they don't want to. Jesus died so all can go to heaven. We must decide whether we will follow Him. Hell was created for the devil and his angels. God doesn't desire for men to be there. He gives men every opportunity to be saved. God is also the judge of all. He alone will judge correctly who will be in hell and who will be heaven.

# Lesson 9: The Devil and His Angels

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## **Introduction**

As we consider the topic of hell, I thought it would be good for us to spend a little time talking about the devil and his angels. In Matthew 25:41, Jesus said:

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

Hell has been prepared for the devil and his angels. The devil and his angels will be in hell. Sadly, so will others. One of the greatest lies of all time is that the DEVIL is not real! This might sound silly to us, but many Americans don’t believe the devil is real. Many believe he is nothing more than a symbol for evil. No doubt, the devil is thankful so many don’t believe he is real. It makes his job at deceiving men and women that much easier. In this lesson, we will discuss the devil and his angels. As we study the devil, it’s important to remember Deuteronomy 29:29. We must be content with what has been revealed to us.

## **The Lesson**

1. What comes to mind when thinking about Satan? How do you visualize him? How do you think your picture of him might help or hinder you as you fight against him?

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2. Read Genesis 3:1-7. What do we learn about the devil from these verses? What passage in the New Testament refers to the devil as a serpent?

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3. Read the first two chapters of Job. What do we learn about the existence of the devil?

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4. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18; 1 Timothy 5:11-15. What do we learn about the existence of the devil?

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5. Consider these additional passages about the devil and his angels. What can we learn from them?

- Acts 5:1-5
  - 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
  - 2 Corinthians 4:4
  - Ephesians 6:11-12
  - John 8:44
  - Judge 5-6
  - 2 Peter 2:4
  - Revelation 12:1-10
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6. What other passages in scripture help us to see the existence of the devil and his nature? List them below.

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7. In the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) and in Acts, we see a lot of demon possession. Study the following passages and write what you learn about demon possession:

- Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39; Matthew 8:29
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- Acts 19:11-20
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- Matthew 12:43-45
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8. Satan is often referred to as Lucifer. Read Isaiah 13 and Isaiah 14. Based upon the context, what are your thoughts about who Lucifer is referring to? Do you think the devil is Lucifer? Explain.

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9. What other questions do you have concerning the devil and his angels?

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### **Conclusion**

The Bible provides us with a lot of information about the devil, demon possession, and his angels. Yet, there are some questions that are more challenging to answer. Let's remember what Jesus said in Matthew 25:41. Hell has been prepared for the devil and his angels. He has no opportunity to escape it. WE DO! We don't have to be with the devil and his angels. Let's continue to follow Christ. Heaven is on the other side.



# Lesson 10: God and His Holy Angels

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## **Introduction**

One of my favorite shows growing up was about a man who was an angel. The show was called, *Highway to Heaven*. The star of the show was Michael Landon.

Since that show, many other television programs and movies have been about angels. Yet many people are not familiar with what the Bible says about angels.

We need to consider God and His holy angels, Luke 9:26.

The Bible says a lot about angels. Throughout the scriptures, we find angels played a part delivering God's message to man, fighting against the devil, and so much more. As we think about standing on the edge of eternity, let's see what else we can learn about angels. We will be with them in heaven one day.

## **The Lesson**

1. What are angels? Read the following passages to help answer this question, Luke 20:27-38; Hebrews 1:5-14.

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2. How are angels described in Job 1:6?

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3. Where did angels come from? Read Colossians 1:16; Job 38:7 to help answer.

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4. Why were angels created? Read the following passages to help answer this question, Hebrews 1:14; Psalm 103:20; Psalm 148:2-5; Acts 7:53; Acts 10:1-4.

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5. How do we see angels interacting with man on earth? Consider the following passages to help answer this question, Luke 24:1-6; Acts 12:1-9. Now identify some other passages to help answer this question.

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6. What do we learn about angels and them having free will?

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7. What do we learn about angels and them having a means of salvation like man? Read Hebrews 2:14-18 to help answer this question.

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8. What role do angels play today? Write your thoughts below.

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9. In Jude 5–9, we read about an angel named Michael. Read the following passages to see what else we learn about him, Daniel 10; Revelation 12:1-10.

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11. Can you think of any other angels that are named in the scriptures? Write them below and what you learn about them.

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### ***Conclusion***

Angels are spoken of throughout the scriptures. One lesson on them is certainly not sufficient to cover every passage that speaks of them. But we can know they are real. We can know we will be with God's Holy Angels in heaven.



# Lesson 11: Heaven Is for Real: Do You Want to Go There?

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## **Introduction**

“In heaven, we will color things all day. In heaven, we will receive wings like angels. In heaven, there will be many rainbows. In heaven, everyone flies except Jesus.” That’s according to Colton Burpo, a boy who claimed to have died, gone to heaven, and return to tell his story in the book and movie called, *Heaven Is for Real*. Are you familiar with this young man’s story?

Indeed, heaven is for real! But we don’t need Colton’s so-called account of going to heaven to know it’s for real. We have the Holy Scriptures, which teach us heaven is for real. Jesus is clear that heaven is real, Matthew 5:10-12. The bigger question for us is do we want to go there?

At the end of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, he said this:

“If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha.”

Do you know what the word *Maranatha* means? It means, “O Lord come.” Paul had this mindset of desiring to be with Christ. Do we? We sing about heaven and will be studying it now in our workbook. But is heaven a place we truly desire to go to?

In Revelation 22:20, John said this:

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

Is this our mindset when it comes to heaven? As the people of God, we are to have an EAGER mindset about the return of Christ and being at home with Him in heaven. Write out what Paul said in Philippians 3:20-21.

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Is heaven a place we really want to go to? I often think of countries and states I want to visit. I will study them. I will see what’s required to get there. Then I will do best to make it there. How

much more should our mindset be when it comes to heaven? Let's strive to do our very best to make it there. Heaven is real. But we need to be sure we really want to go there.

In this lesson, we will begin to examine some aspects about heaven.

### ***The Lesson***

1. The Bible teaches that heaven is real. Read the following passages and write down what we learn about heaven:

- John 14:1-4
  - Acts 1:9-11
  - Acts 7:56
  - Colossians 1:5
  - 1 Peter 1:3-5
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2. Who is currently in heaven? Read the following passages to help answer this question:

- Matthew 3:16-17
- Matthew 5:34
- Matthew 6:9
- Matthew 18:10; Luke 15:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10
- Acts 1:9-11
- Acts 2:33
- Revelation 4 (the entire chapter)
- Revelation 14:13



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3. Read the following passages and identify the theme you find in these scriptures. Are you surprised at what we learn from these scriptures? Explain.

- Matthew 5:11-12
- Hebrews 10:35-36
- Colossians 3:23-24

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4. What will happen with the state of our physical bodies in heaven? Read the following passages to answer this question:

- Philippians 3:20-21
- 1 John 3:1-2
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-54
- 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

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4. What else did Jesus say about heaven? Read the following passages and write down what you learn:

- Matthew 6:19-21
- Luke 10:17-20
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17

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5. As God's people, what kind of mindset are we to have ? Read the following passages and write down what you learn.

- Colossians 3:1-15
- 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

6. Why is it at times challenging for God's people to stay excited or passionate about going to heaven?

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7. What has Jesus done and demonstrated for us showing how much He wants us in heaven with Him? Consider the following passages to answer. How should this change us?

- Galatians 4:4-5
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Philippians 2:4-8

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## ***Conclusion***

Heaven is real. We can really go to heaven. Think about what you can do this week to focus more on heaven and what great blessings lie ahead for us in the future.



# Lesson 12: Big Questions about Heaven

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## ***Introduction***

If you noticed in the last lesson, there were scriptural references about heaven that were not mentioned. That's because I wanted to save them for this lesson. One can never study the topic of heaven too much. We must use what has been revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. The secret things belong to God, Deuteronomy 29:29.

I have lots of questions about heaven. Do you? In this lesson, we will consider some questions and passages that people have questions about, as we think about heaven. As we think about these questions, I want to begin with a question.

Why will heaven be so great? How would answer this question?

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## ***The Lesson***

### **Question #1: Is Revelation 21 Depicting Heaven? If So, What Do We Learn?**

Revelation 21 is often a chapter where people turn to find out what heaven is going to be like. This chapter certainly brings comfort to Christians. There are typically two views about this chapter:

- First: The city that is described is the victorious church as God considers it today, purged and purified by the tribulation through which it has passed.
- Second: The vision portrays the church at home with God in final glory beyond the judgment.

- What are your thoughts about what Revelation 21 portrays?

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- If we read Revelation 21 as a vision portraying heaven and what it will be like, what do we learn?

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**Question #2: What Will We Do in Heaven? What Scriptures Come to Mind for You?**

Consider the following passages as you answer this question:

- Revelation 14:13
- Hebrews 4:9-11
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-54
- Romans 8:23
- Matthew 25:14-30
- Revelation 22:3-5

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**Question #3: Will Heaven Be on Earth?**

What does Peter have to say about this? Read 2 Peter 3:12-13.

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**Question #4: Will We Know One Another in Heaven?**

Some common objections for those who say, “Yes, we will know one another in heaven” is that if we know who is there, then we will also know who is not there.” How would you answer this?

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Do some research and see what scriptures might help us to answer this question.

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**Question #5: Will We Become Bored in Heaven?**

I’m sure there are those who sometimes may have this question. What is it that can prompt this question to be even be asked? How would you answer it?

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***Conclusion***

There are some questions we will have to wait have answered when we are in heaven. However, I’m not sure every question we have may even be answered. Here’s what we can know. God is real. Jesus is real. Heaven is real. We can go there one day! Let’s make a decision not to allow anyone or anything to get in our way.





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