

The Afterlife

Part 2

LIFE-CHANGE OBJECTIVE

- Joy!
- To decide to live in the light of eternity in one significant way the next week.

PHILIPPIANS 3:14 (NLT)

I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to Heaven.

God has created men and women with the sense that this life is not all there is. The Bible says,

ECCLESIASTES 3:11

He has also set eternity in the human heart.

All of us know instinctively that the grave is not our final destiny. In the last session we explored what the afterlife will be like for unbelievers.

FOUNDATIONS DISCIPLESHIP STUDY: The Afterlife (Part 2)

Many questions remain about the specifics of the afterlife for believers:

- Where is Heaven?
- Who will be in Heaven?
- How will I be judged as a believer?
- What will Heaven be like?
- How can Heaven affect my life now?

WHERE IS HEAVEN?

Heaven is _____

PSALM 123:1 (GNT)

Lord, I look up to you, up to heaven, where you rule.

In the Old Testament, Heaven is spoken of figuratively in terms of layers of sky. The heavens are where the birds fly, the trees breathe, and the rain falls. This was referred to as the _____.

The heavens are also where the moon and stars move in their orbits. This was referred to as the _____.

The _____, or the highest Heaven, was said to be where God dwells in a special way.

Heaven is _____

Heaven is God's _____ and the _____ of believers.

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REVELATION 21:3 (GNT)

I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.”

One of the names given to Heaven is the

HEBREWS 11:16 (NLT)

But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he prepared a heavenly city for them.

WHO WILL BE IN HEAVEN?

In Hebrews 12:22-23 we’re told of many inhabitants:

HEBREWS 12:22-23 (NCV)

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands of angels gathered together with joy. You have come to the meeting of God’s firstborn children whose names were written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all people, and to the spirits of good people who have been made perfect.

This passage tells us that in Heaven there will be:

- Angels
- God
- The Church

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- Old Testament believers

As we saw in the last study, the only people who will spend eternity with God are those who choose him in this life.

ROMANS 10:9

That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord”, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

CLOSER LOOK

Will babies or children who die go to Heaven? Yes! Although they are not old enough to be saved, they are kept safe by God’s grace. A child (or someone who is mentally handicapped) who dies before reaching the age that they can understand their sin and need for Christ will not be held accountable for what they cannot understand. That would violate both God’s justice and God’s grace. Although the Bible does not directly answer this question, we can see two specific indications that the answer is yes.

1. God is just and righteous in everything he does.

PSALM 145:17

The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.

2. David believed that he would be reunited with his baby who had died (2 Samuel 12:23).

HOW WILL I BE JUDGED AS A BELIEVER?

The Bible tells us of two times of judgement at the end of the world:

1. The _____

At this judgement those who do not believe in Christ will hear their final judgement and sentencing of separation from God. Those who trust in Christ will not face this judgement.

JOHN 5:24 (GNT)

“I am telling you the truth: those who hear my words and believe in him who sent me have eternal life. They will not be judged, but have already passed from death to life.”

2. The _____

In speaking to the believers in Corinth, Paul writes,

2 CORINTHIANS 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Bema is the Greek word translated “judgement seat” in these verses.

THE NATURE OF THE BEMA JUDGEMENT

1 CORINTHIANS 3:10-15

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet be saved – even though only as one escaping through the flames.

1. What we've built into our lives that will last will be

_____.

2. What we've built into our lives that will not last will be

_____.

3. Whatever our rewards or loss, our salvation is

_____.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:5

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

CLOSER LOOK

We're told in Scripture that believers will be rewarded based on three specifics:

1. _____

MATTHEW 16:27

"For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he had done."

2. _____

JEREMIAH 17:10

"I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve."

3. _____

MATTHEW 12:36

"But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgement for every empty word they have spoken."

WHAT WILL HEAVEN BE LIKE?

SIX TRUTHS TO BRING YOU JOY

PSALM 16:11

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

1. Holiness

JUDE 1:24 (NLT)

And now, all glory to God, who is able to keep you from stumbling, and who will bring you into his glorious presence innocent of sin and with great joy.

1 JOHN 3:2 (NCV)

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and we have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him, because we will see him as he really is.

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2. A glorified body

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:4

For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

3. Immortality

REVELATION 21:4

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:53 (NLT)

For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

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4. Satisfaction of all needs

REVELATION 7:16

“Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.”

5. Sharing of Christ’s glory

ROMANS 8:17

Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

6. Intimate fellowship with God and other believers

1 CORINTHIANS 13:12

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

HOW CAN HEAVEN AFFECT MY LIFE NOW?

Let's look at five specific areas that can affect our lives now by being heavenly minded.

1. Motivation for _____

JOHN 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

1 JOHN 5:11-12 (NCV)

This is what God told us: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life, but whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

2. Wise use of _____

MATTHEW 6:19-21 (NCV)

" Don't store treasures for yourselves here on earth where moths and rust will destroy them and thieves can break in and steal them. But store your treasures in heaven where they cannot be destroyed by moths or rust and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your treasure is."

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3. Serving the _____

MATTHEW 25:34-40

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in person and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

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LISTEN, CHRISTIAN

I was hungry, and you formed a humanities club and discussed my hunger. Thank you.

I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly to your chapel in the cellar and prayed for my release.

I was naked and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I was sick and you knelt and thanked God for your health.

I was homeless and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.

I was lonely and you left me alone to pray for me.

You seem so holy, so close to God. But I am still very hungry, and lonely, and cold.

Thank you.

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4. Endurance in _____

2 CORINTHIAN 4:16-18 (NCV)

So we do not give up. Our physical body is becoming older and weaker, but our spirit inside us is made new every day. We have small troubles for a while now, but they are helping us gain an eternal glory that is much greater than the troubles. We set our eyes not on what we see but on what we cannot see will last forever.

5. Easing of _____

COLOSSIANS 3:1-2 (TLB)

Since you became alive again, so to speak, when Christ arose from the dead, now set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of heaven where he sits beside God in the place of honor and power. Let heaven fill your thoughts; don't spend your time worrying about things down here.

ACTING ON THE TRUTH

God's Word repeatedly instructs us to shift our focus from earthly matters to focus on God's perspective. Take seven minutes at the beginning or the end of the day for a week to focus on these seven truths:

1. His plan for me will never change.
2. My salvation is safe and secure in Heaven, where nothing can destroy it.
3. When he comes for me I will go with him to the home he carefully and lovingly has been preparing for me.
4. Nothing can ever separate me from his love – no pain, no suffering, no tragedy, no hardship, no demon, no horrible mistake on my part, nothing!
5. I am to spend my days learning to love him and to trust him.
6. I am to be his arms and hands of compassion to fellow human beings.
7. And someday, I will join billions of other believers at his throne, and together we will worship him. We will sing with the angels,

REVELATION 5:12

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and praise!”