

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>What We Know About Heaven</b>
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>The Present Heaven</b>
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>The New Earth</b>
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Reigning and Ruling</b>
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Glimpses Into Heaven</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Relationships in Heaven</b>
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Our Greatest Adventure</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Earning Our Rewards Now</b>

## WEEK 1 WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HEAVEN

To help understand the Bible and especially those difficult passages we need to know more about God. During this study we'll look at some of God's attributes to better understand His Word. First attribute is that He is our Heavenly Father. We may not have the best experience having a Godly father or being one, but in our heart we know what a good father is. As a good Father:

He provides for us

*Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*

He is generous

*Luke 11:13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

He blesses us

*Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*

He will always be there for us

*Hebrews 13:5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

He loves us more than anyone can

*John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

- **What do you think Heaven will be like?** \_\_\_\_\_
- The reason we are not homesick for heaven is that we don't know enough about it unlike our home here on earth. This study is to help us understand what heaven will be like so we will be homesick for our eternal home and live a better life while we are here on earth.
- We'll see that God never gave up on his original plan for human beings to dwell on Earth. In fact the climax of history will be the creation of new heavens and a New Earth, a resurrected universe inhabited by resurrected people living with the resurrected Jesus.
- Jonathan Edwards, a Puritan teacher said, "It becomes us to spend this life only as a journey toward heaven."
- Some of Satan's favorite lies are about Heaven. Revelation 13:6 tells us the satanic beast "opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in

heaven.” Our enemy slanders three things; God’s person, God’s people and God’s place, namely Heaven.

- Misconceptions about heaven and what the Bible says:
  - **What most of us assume about Heaven:** Non-Earth, Unfamiliar, Disembodied, Foreign, Leaving favorite things behind, no time and space, static, strange and unknown, boring, no learning or discovery, loss of desire, presence of little that we desire
  - **What the Bible says about Heaven:** New earth, familiar, resurrected, all the comforts of home, retaining the good, time and space, dynamic, both old and new, A God to worship and serve, a universe to rule, purposeful work, friends to enjoy, an eternity of learning and discovery, fascinating, continuous fulfillment of desires,

- What kind of place will the new earth be?

*Revelation 21:22-27 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. 24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

*Psalms 27:4 One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.*

*Isaiah 65:17-25 " 17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.*

- **What do you think the new earth will look like** \_\_\_\_\_

*Hebrews 11:15-16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

*Revelation 21:4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

*John 14:2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.[2]*

*John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

- It tells us our new home will be a place of rejoicing, filling our hearts with joy. There will be no more weeping or crying, we no longer will feel the pain that this world brings. Our lives will go on and we will live in some type of dwelling and that we will eat, most likely we will be vegetarians since there will be no more death. We will work and enjoy what we are doing, because we will be doing what God created us to do. We will have a closer relationship with God talking and hearing His voice. We will all get along, even the animals. A place we can only imagine here on this earth.
- Job knew there was going to be an eternal life and that He was going to be with God here on the new earth.

*Job 19:25-26 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;  
26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God,*

- One of the keys in seeing what Heaven will be like is New Earth. In the Greek new means renewed or renovated. God could have said a new place, but He states it is a new Earth, which means it must have a lot of the attributes that this Earth must have or it wouldn't qualify as Earth.
- **What is the most beautiful thing you've seen here on earth?** \_\_\_\_\_
- On my trip to Hawaii I saw things that were beautiful, amazing, magnificent, and awe inspiring. Why is that, because God is beautiful, amazing, magnificent, and awe inspiring.

*Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*

- The closer you get to God the more you see Him. I know I can look at the ocean, mountains, sky, plants and children and see Him and can't believe there are people in the world that can't see Him. I can't understand how anyone can believe this all came about by accident. This is one of the reasons that evolution doesn't make any sense

- Often our thinking is backwards. Why do we imagine that God patterns Heaven’s holy city after an earthly city, as if Heaven knows nothing of community and culture and has to get its ideas from us? Isn’t it more likely that earthly realities, including cities, are derived from heavenly counterparts? We tend to start with earth and reason up towards heaven, when instead we should start with Heaven and reason down towards Earth. It isn’t merely an accommodation to our earthly familiar structure, for instance, that God calls himself a father and us children. On the contrary, he created father child relationships to display his relationship with us, just as he created human marriage to reveal the love relationship between Christ and His bride.
- God says set your minds on things above. Our lives can be changed by living our lives with an eternal perspective.
- **Why do you think that Statement is true?** \_\_\_\_\_

*Colossians 3:1-3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

- In 1952, Florence Chadwick stepped into the waters of the Pacific Ocean off Catalina island, California, determined to swim to the mainland. An experienced swimmer, she had already been the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways. The weather that day was foggy and chilly; Florence could hardly see the boats accompanying her. Still, she swam steadily for fifteen hours. When she begged to be taken out of the water along the way, her mother, in a boat alongside, told her that she was close and that she could make it. Finally, physically and emotionally exhausted, Florence stopped swimming and was pulled out. It wasn’t until she was aboard the boat that she discovered the shore was less than half a mile away. At a news conference the next day, she said, “All I could see was the fog. I think if I could have seen the shore I would have made it.
- If we can learn to fix our eyes on Jesus, to see through the fog of our present trials and circumstances, and picture our eternal home on our mind’s eye, it will comfort and energize us, giving us a clear view of the shore – our eternal destination. Like the apostle Paul, we are encouraged to forget what is behind and press on toward the goal to win the prize.
- **Are you able to see the shore?** \_\_\_\_\_

*Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

- God commands us to set our hearts and minds on Heaven where Jesus is seated in honor and power. It is an ongoing process. But if we let the truth fuel our imagination and our thoughts, we can be more heavenly minded and of more earthly good. We need to know this place is temporary, but serves an eternal purpose.

*2 Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

- King David was preoccupied with God's person and with God's place. He longed to be where God was and to gaze on his beauty. To see God will be our greatest joy. Take time and think what it will be like seeing God face to face. I think of it and I will be so humbled that I won't be able to get off my knees, thinking that God wants me with Him. I would imagine to see that much beauty in love will be breathtaking.

*Psalms 27:4 One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.*

- **What is it that you are going to be looking forward to in Heaven?** \_\_\_\_\_

*Psalms 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.*

- God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment and this will not change when we go to Heaven. But these pleasures should never eclipse our love for God, but rather encourage us to give glory to the One who provides. Our lives were designed to reflect the glory of God as we enjoy what He has given us.

*1 Timothy 6:17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*

- As the teaching said today our default destination is not heaven but hell. We are born with sin and placed on the road to eternal damnation with only one hope to make it to our eternal home.

- **How should we look at others knowing this?** \_\_\_\_\_

*Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. **14** Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

*Revelation 21:26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. **27** But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

## Scriptures

*Revelation 21:22-27 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **23** The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. **24** And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. **25** Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). **26** And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. **27** But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

*Isaiah 65:17-25 " **17** "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. **18** But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. **19** I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. **20** "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. **21** They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. **22** They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. **23** They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. **24** "It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear. **25** The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.*

*Luke 23:42-43 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." **43** And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

*Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*

*Revelation 21:26-27 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. **27** But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

*Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. **14** Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

*Job 19:25-26 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; **26** And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God,*

*Colossians 3:1-3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **2** Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. **3** For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

*1 Corinthians 15:55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"*

*2 Corinthians 5:6-8 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. **7** For we walk by faith, not by sight. **8** We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

*Ephesians 1:10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.*

*Hebrews 11:16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

*John 14:2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.<sup>1</sup>*

*John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

*Luke 10:20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."*

*Luke 16:19-31 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. **20** But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, **21** desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. **22** So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. **23** And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. **24** Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' **25** But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. **26** And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' **27** Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, **28** for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' **29** Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' **30** And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' **31** But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "*

*Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."*



*Matthew 8:12 But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

*Matthew 25:46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

*2 Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

*Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. **13** Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, **14** I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

*Psalms 27:4 One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.*

*Psalms 42:1-2 To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of the sons of Korah. As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. **2** My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*

*Psalms 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.*

*Romans 8:20-25 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; **21** because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. **23** Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. **24** For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.*

*1 Timothy 1:16-17 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. **17** Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

## REFLECTIONS

### Day 1 – If We Can Just See the Shore

If we can learn to fix our eyes on Jesus, to see through the fog of our present trials and circumstances, and picture our eternal home in our mind's eye, it will comfort and energize us, giving us a clear view of the shore – our eternal destination. Like the apostle Paul, we are encouraged to forget what is behind and press on toward the goal to win the prize.

Use the space included for each day to write down any thoughts or feelings that God is putting on your heart.

***Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

**Reflection:** Are you able to see the shore? What is God revealing to you?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 2 – Heavenly Minded and of Earthly Good

God commands us to set our hearts and minds on Heaven where Jesus Christ is seated in honor and power. It is an ongoing process. But if we let truth fuel our imagination and our thoughts, we can be more heavenly minded and of more earthly good.

*Colossians 3:1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

**Reflection:** As you focus your mind on Heaven and let your imagination soar, what is God revealing to you?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 3 – Seeing God’s Face

David was preoccupied with God’s person and with God’s place. He longed to be where God was and to gaze on his beauty. To see God will be our greatest joy.

*Psalms 27:4 One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.*

**Reflection:** What do you think it will be like to see God face to face?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 4 – Our Primary Pleasure

Job was confident that, in his own flesh, he would see God (Job 19:25-27), and, although Job was a troubled soul, he lived with great anticipation of the day he would see God face to face. We can catch glimpses of God in what he has made (Romans 1:20), and as the provider of everything, he is the source of every pleasure.

*Psalms 42:1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.*

**Reflection:** How can we learn to see God as the source of every good thing? Think about how this affects your idea of what is important in your life.

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 5 – Enjoying God in Secondary Pleasures

God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment (1 Timothy 6:17) and this will not change when we go to Heaven. But these pleasures should never eclipse our love for God, but rather encourage us to give glory to the One who provides.

*1 Timothy 6:17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*

**Reflection:** How can our lives reflect glory to God as we enjoy what he has given us?

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 6 – Knowing for Sure That We’re Going to Heaven**

We should not overlook the fact that our sin is sufficient to keep us out of Heaven. Heaven is not our default destination when we die, Jesus Christ offers everyone the gifts of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life in Heaven.

*Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

*Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

**Reflection:** Have you said yes to God’s invitation? If not, what is holding you back? Who can you talk to this week about taking this step and assuring your place in Heaven with God?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 7 – Heaven on Earth

The New Jerusalem, which is in Heaven, will come down to the New earth where God will dwell with his redeemed people on Earth.

***Revelations 21:2-3 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.***

**Reflection:** What do you think about living on a New earth that is also, Heaven?

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## WEEK 2 THE PRESENT HEAVEN

- Laughter is one of the good gifts God has given us to enjoy. Our society has perverted to an extent that we are not sure it is from God or from Satan. Satan can't give us anything only distort the gifts God has given us. I'm sure there will be a lot of laughter in Heaven, with Jesus as one of the best story tellers of all times.
  - *Luke 6:21 Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh.*
  - *James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*
- Paradise is an Intermediate Heaven where believers wait in anticipation for the New Earth where God's children will live together with the Lord in resurrected bodies for all eternity. This intermediate Heaven isn't our final destination, even though it will be wonderful it is not the place we were made for-the place God promises to refashion for us to live forever.
- **How has the knowledge that the current intermediate heaven is not our final destination of believers affect you?** \_\_\_\_\_
- Even though the intermediate Heaven is not an eternal Heaven, we can be confident in the promise of the resurrection and eternal life and our assurance is that Jesus was resurrected and that we will be resurrected at His coming.

*1 Corinthians 15:21-23* **21** For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. **23** But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

- **What do you see in this passage that indicates believers in Christ will indeed be resurrected from the dead?** \_\_\_\_\_
- **When will the resurrection come according to this passage?** \_\_\_\_\_
- The present Heaven is in the angelic realm, distinctly separate from the earth, though having more physical qualities than we might assume. By contrast the future Heaven our eternal home, will be in the human realm on Earth.

*Revelation 21:1-3* Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. **2** Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

- Notice that the New Jerusalem, which was in Heaven, will come down out of Heaven from God. Where does it go? To the New earth. From that time on. The dwelling of God” will be with redeemed mankind on Earth.
- In Luke Jesus gives us a parable about the present Heaven

*Luke 16:19-31 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' 27 Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29 Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "*

- Consider the story’s major components:
  - When Lazarus died angels carried him to Paradise
  - The rich man went to a place to torment
  - Lazarus is with Abraham
  - The rich man is alone
  - The intermediate Heaven and Hell are separated by a fixed chasm.
  - Both the rich man and Abraham reasoned and communicated, and they maintained their distinct identities from Earth, indicating direct continuity from their earthly lives to their afterlife
  - The rich man and Lazarus are depicted as having physical form. The rich man had a tongue and a thirst that he wished to satisfy with water. Lazarus had a finger, and there was water available to him in Paradise into which he might dip his finger.
  - The rich man certainly remembers, and possibly sees his lost brothers. He expresses concern for their welfare and asks that Lazarus be sent to warn them. This indicates consciousness after death and clear memory of Earth and people on Earth.
  - Abraham says that no one can cross the gap between Heaven and Hell.

- We can learn a great deal about the present Heaven from 3 key verses in Revelations

*Revelation 6:9-11 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. **10** And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" **11** Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

- When these people die on Earth they were relocated to Heaven.
- These people in Heaven were the same ones killed for Christ while on Earth. This demonstrates direct continuity between our identity on Earth and in Heaven
- People in Heaven will be remembered for their lives on Earth.
- They called out, which means they are able to express themselves audibly.
- People in the present Heaven can raise their voices. This indicates that they are rational, communicative, and emotional, even passionate beings like people on Earth
- They called out in a loud voice. This indicates that Heaven is a place of unity and shared perspective.
- The Martyrs are fully conscience, rational and aware of each other, God and the situation on Earth.
- They ask God to intervene on Earth and to act on their behalf.
- Those in Heaven are free to ask God questions, which means they have an audience with God.
- People in Heaven know what is happening on Earth
- Heaven dwellers have a deep concern for justice. We won't have a passive disinterest in what happens on Earth.
- The martyrs remembered their lives on Earth, even remember they were murdered.
- The martyrs pray for judgment on their persecutors who are still hurting others. This suggests the saints in Heaven are seeing and praying for saints on Earth.
- Those in Heaven see God's attributes in a way that makes his judgment of sin more understandable.
- The martyrs wearing white robes suggest the possibility of actual physical form.
- God answers their questions, indicating communication and that we won't know everything in Heaven. The saints knew more after God answered their question which indicate leaning.
- God promises that He will fulfill their request, but they still had to wait. Those in Heaven are anticipating future fulfillment of God's promises.
- There is time in the present Heaven
- People in Heaven have a strong familiar connection with those on Earth who are called their fellow servants and brothers.
- God knows exactly how many martyrs there will be, and He is prepared to return and set up his Kingdom when the final martyr dies.

*Hebrew 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

- This creates a mental picture of the Greek competitions, which were watched by crowds sitting on high up in the stadiums. The “great clouds of witnesses” refers to the saints who’ve gone before us. This image makes it seem that they are watching us and cheering us on here on Earth. Have you ever felt that you can’t go on but something keeps you going, it could be God, the angels or the saints routing you on.

*Luke 15:7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*

- Notice it doesn’t speak of rejoicing by the angels, but in the presence of angels. Who is doing the rejoicing? Logically it’s God and the saints that are in Heaven, who would appreciate the wonder of conversion more than us especially the conversion of those we love. If they are rejoicing, then the saints know what is happening on Earth and not generally, but specific details of individuals coming to faith in Jesus.
- The temple in Heaven is filled with smoke from the glory of God.

*Revelation 15:8 The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.*

- Is this a figurative temple with figurative smoke? Or is there an actual fire creating literal smoke in a real building? We’re told there are scrolls in Heaven, elders who have faces, martyrs who wear cloths and even people with palm branches in their hands

*Revelation 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,*

- There are musical instruments in the present heaven.

*Revelation 8:6 So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.*

- Horses coming into and out of Heaven

*Revelation 19:14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.*

- And an eagle flying overhead in Heaven

*Revelation 8:13 And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"*

- According to scripture we know our new body is going to be so much better than the one we currently occupy. Paul says in

*2 Corinthians 5:2-4 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, **3** if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. **4** For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.*

*Philippians 1:22-24 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. **23** For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. **24** Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.*

- The Bible gives us a lot of evidence that what goes on here on earth is visible to those in Heaven. If there is rejoicing in Heaven when one sinner comes to Christ, it is clear that those in Heaven are able to see what is happening on earth. Do you ever think who was rejoicing over you when you came to Christ? How does knowing some of your love ones are watching help you spiritual growth?
- Scripture tells us that when we are in Heaven we will remember what happened to us on earth. We will give an account of our lives and receive our rewards accordingly. We will be united with the saints that went to Heaven before us, and we will know what is happening in the lives of the saints on earth. We will join Jesus in constant prayer for them.

*2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

- We will remember what we did on earth

*Romans 14:11-12 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." **12** So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

- We will rest

*Rev 6:11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

- There will be joy.

*Luke 15:7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*

- We will work and be blessed

*Isaiah 65:23 They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them.*

- Every person will be resurrected from the dead.

*Acts 24:15 I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.*

*Revelation 20:12-15 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. **13** The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. **14** Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **15** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

- In the same way that God promises to redeem and make mankind new, he will also redeem the earth. This promise of a renewed earth, the New Heaven and the New Earth, give us good reason to worship God. God made this earth for us, but it has been destroyed by sin. However God will redeem this earth and refashion it into the New Earth, where we will live forever with Him. All things were created by God for his glory, and he will not give up on us or his creation. Upon creating the heavens and earth, he called them “very good.” Never once has he renounced his claim to what he made.

*Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.*

*Isaiah 66:22 "For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain.*

*Revelation 21:1-5 **1** Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. **2** Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. **4** And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall*

*be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

- That God would come down on the New Earth to live with us fits perfectly with his original plan. God could have taken Adam and Eve up to Heaven to visit with him in the world. Instead, he came down to walk with them in their world. Jesus says of anyone who would be his disciple.

*John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."*

- This is a picture of God's ultimate plan, not to take us up to live in his realm made for him, but to come down and live with us in the realm he made for us
- Scripture tells us that the New Earth will be a real place where believers will live together with the Lord in resurrected bodies for all eternity. A place that we should be looking forward to and focusing on.

*2 Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

- So what do you think treasures are, are we going to own anything in Heaven? God is building us an individual home, we are to lay up treasures for ourselves, the different crowns and rewards that God will hand out according to our works, there is going to be a white stone with our name on it. Sometimes we think possessions are evil, but when they are distributed by God they are a blessing.

*Col 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.*

So is this inheritance a position or possession?

- Then there is Daniel

*Daniel 12:13 But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."*

- Here is a promise in Revelations

*Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things.* What about those that are faithful with what God gives them here on this earth?

*Matthew 25:21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

- We need to be ready for Heaven and live the life we should be living while we're still here on earth.
- Heaven is a real and physical place. Helping to see heaven as a real place will help us understand and desire to be there. Stephen even got a glimpse of it before he went there.

*Acts 7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, **56** and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"*

- If we meditate on Heaven and the joy it's going to bring it will be easier to avoid the temptations of this world. If you think how wonderful Heaven will be sin will be unappealing.
- Meditating on God, God's word and Heaven will get us ready for our final destination. However our high tolerance for sin shows us we are unprepared. Heaven should affect our activities and ambitions, our recreation and friendships, and the way we spend our money and time.
- If I believe I'll spend eternity in a world of unending beauty and adventure, will I be content to spend all my evenings staring at game shows, sitcoms, and ball games? Even if I keep my eyes off of impurities, how much time will I want to invest in what doesn't matter?
- What will last forever? Spending time in God's word and investing in people will pay off in eternity and bring me joy and perspective now.
- Following Christ is not a call to abstain from gratification but to delay gratification. It's finding our joy in Christ rather than seeking joy in the things of this world. Heaven, our assurance of eternal gratification and fulfillment, should be our North Star, reminding us where we are and which direction to go.
- When we realize the pleasures that await us in God's presence, we can forego lesser pleasures now. When we realize the possessions that await us in Heaven, we will gladly give away possessions on Earth to store up treasures in Heaven. When we realize the power offered to us as rulers in God's kingdom, a power we could not handle now but will handle with humility and benevolence then, we can forgo the pursuit of power here.
- To be Heaven oriented is to be goal oriented in the best sense. Paul says



*Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, **14** I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

- Thinking of Heaven will motivate us to live each day in profound thankfulness to God:

*Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

- If we traveled to another planet we would not come back unchanged. A person who gives sustained thought to another world, the Heaven where Christ is and the resurrected Earth where we will live forever with Him, also does not remain unchanged. He becomes a new person. He'll no longer fill his stomach with stale leftovers and scraps fallen to a dirty kitchen floor. He smells the banquet being prepared for him. He won't spoil his appetite. He knows what the mouth is watering for.

*Matthew 6:20-21 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

**What do you think treasures are?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be.** \_\_\_\_\_

## Scriptures

*1 Corinthians 15:44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

*2 Corinthians 5:8-10 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. **9** Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. **10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

*1 Samuel 28:15-19 Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do." **16** Then Samuel said: "Why then do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? **17** And the LORD has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. **18** Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. **19** Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."*

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. **14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.*

*1 Timothy 6:17-19 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. **18** Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, **19** storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

*2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. **11** Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? **13** Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

*Acts 7:55-56 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, **56** and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"*

*Daniel 12:2-3 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. **3** Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.*

*Ephesians 1:10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.*

*Ezekiel 28:13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created.*

*Hebrews 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

*John 14:2-3 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. **3** And 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.*

*Luke 12:33 Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.*

*Luke 15:7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*

*Luke 16:22-31 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. **23** And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. **24** Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' **25** But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. **26** And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' **27** Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, **28** for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' **29** Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' **30** And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will*

*Luke 19:17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'*

*Luke 23:43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

*Malachi 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.*

*Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

*Matthew 12:36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.*

*Matthew 19:21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."*

*Philippians 1:23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.*

*Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

## REFLECTIONS

### Day 8 – Where God’s People Go When They Die

When we leave earth and enter into the presence of God, we will be home. We have hope of a wonderful eternity after this life. For now we look forward to living with God in the Intermediate Heaven with anticipation of living with him eternally in the New Heaven on the New Earth.

***1 Thessalonians 4:13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.***

**Reflection:** The idea of an Intermediate Heaven may be new to you; consider what you’ve learned about the intermediate Heaven this week. Ask God to show you He wants you to focus on.

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 9 – The Present (Intermediate) Heaven: A Physical Place?

In Acts 7:55-56, Stephen saw things that were described as being real and physical. Heaven is a real and a physical place.

*Acts 7:55-56 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, **56** and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"*

**Reflection:** Think about Heaven as a real place. How does this help you look forward to Heaven?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 10 – Paradise: The Present Heaven

Jesus assured the thief, hanging on the cross next to Him that he would be with Him that day in Paradise, Jesus was speaking of the place we go when we leave this earth, the Intermediate Heaven. The Garden of Eden was not destroyed when Adam and Eve were removed from it and it is the place where the Tree of Life remains. The Paradise Jesus spoke of may be the Garden of Eden and the place we occupy in the Intermediate Heaven.

***Luke 23:43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."***

**Reflection:** what do you imagine Paradise to be like? What sounds good to you about the present Heaven right now?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 11 – Seeing Earth from Heaven

The Bible gives us a lot of evidence that what goes on here on earth is visible to those in Heaven. If there is rejoicing in Heaven when one sinner comes to Christ, it is clear that those in Heaven are able to see what is happening on earth.

*Luke 15:7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*

**Reflection:** Who was rejoicing in Heaven when you came to Christ? How does knowing they are there watching you, help you to press on toward spiritual growth?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 12 – Heaven’s In habitants: Remembering and Praying?

Scripture tells us that when we are in Heaven we will remember what happened to us on earth. We will give an account of our lives and receive our rewards accordingly. We will be united with the saints that went to Heaven before us, and we will know what is happening in the lives of the saints on earth. We will join Jesus in the constant prayer for them.

***2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.***

**Reflection:** How are you encouraged by knowing where your loved ones are and that one day you’ll be with them again in the presence of God?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 13 – God’s Plan to Redeem the Earth

In the same way that God Promises to redeem and make mankind new, He will also redeem the earth. This promise of a renewed earth, the New Heavens and the New Earth, give us good reason for grateful worship of our Lord.

*Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind."*

**Reflection:** take time to thank God today for his masterful plan to redeem us and the earth.

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 14 – The New Earth: A Real Earth?

God made this earth for us, but it has been destroyed by sin. However God will redeem this earth and refashion it into the New Earth, where we will live forever with Him. All things were created by God for his glory, and he will not give up on us or his creation.

***Revelations 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."***

**Reflection:** Reflect on the knowledge that this earth will not remain in its current state forever.

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### WEEK 3 THE NEW EARTH

- One of the Lord's greatest attributes is compassion and since we are created in his image we have an inner desire to show compassion to others. Unfortunately our sinful nature rules it out a lot of the time wanting our way. The Lord's compassion is why we are sitting here today.

*Matthew 18:26-27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.*

*Matthew 9:36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.*

*Matthew 14:14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.*

*Matthew 15:32 Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."*

*Matthew 20:34 So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.*

*Mark 1:40-41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."*

*Mark 5:19 However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."*

*Luke 7:13 When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."*

*Luke 15:20 And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.*

- One of my favorite authors is Max Lucado. In his book *The Eye of the Storm* is written: When Jesus lands on the shore of Bethsaida, he leaves the Sea of Galilee and steps into a sea of humanity. Keep in mind; he has crossed the sea to get away from the crowds. He needs to grieve. He longs to relax with his followers. He needs anything but another crowd of thousands to teach and heal. But his love for his people overcomes his need for rest. Many of those he healed would never say thank you, but he healed them anyway. Most would be more concerned with being healthy than being holy, but he healed them anyway. Some of

those who asked for bread today would cry for his blood a few months later, but he healed them anyway. He had compassion on them.

- As we are God's image bearers we are called to have the same attributes as He does, so we are called to have compassion.

*1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;*

- The coming renewal of all things will include everything. Everything will be restored, returned to its original condition. Mankind will be restored to what we once were, what God designed us to be, fully embodied and righteous beings. The Universe, the rest of everything, will be restored to what it once was. God will restore everything on earth

*Acts 3:21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

- Restoration implies renewal or rebuilding of something that has been damaged or destroyed. Christ's resurrection is the foundation of our faith as stated in:

*1 Corinthians 15:12-19 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. **14** And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. **15** Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up--if in fact the dead do not rise. **16** For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. **17** And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! **18** Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **19** If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.*

**According to 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, why is Christ's resurrection so important? \_\_\_\_\_**

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- Removing the curse
- *Revelation 22:3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.*
- The following verse tells us a lot about what happened to the earth because of the curse. Can you imagine earth without the curse?

*Genesis 3:17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. **18** Both thorns*

*and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. **19** In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."*

- We will no longer engage in painful toil, but will enjoy satisfying caretaking. No more weeds. No more death. Our welfare is inseparable from the earth's welfare. Our destiny is inseparable from earth's destiny. That's why the curse on mankind required that the earth be cursed and why the earth will also be resurrected when we are resurrected. The curse will be reversed. Jesus came to remove the curse of sin and death.

*Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

- Jesus is the second Adam who will undo the damage wrought by the first Adam. In the cross and resurrection, God made a way not only to restore his original design for mankind, but also to expand it. In our resurrection bodies, we will again dwell on Earth, a New Earth, completely free of the curse.

*1 Corinthians 15:21-23 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. **23** But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*

- Under the curse, human culture has not been eliminated, but it has been severely hampered by sin, death and decay. Before the fall, food was readily available with minimum labor. Time was available to pursue thoughtful aesthetic ideas, to work for the sheer pleasure of it, to please and glorify God by developing skills and abilities. Since the Fall, generations have lived and died after spending most of their productive years eking out an existence in the pursuit of food, shelter and protection against theft and war. Mankind has been distracted and debilitated by sickness and sin.
- The removal of the Curse means that people, culture, the earth, and the universe will again be as God intended. The lifting of the Curse comes at a terrible price; "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us"

*Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),*

- God's law shows us how far short we fall. But Jesus took on himself the curse of sin, satisfying God's wrath. By taking the Curse upon himself and defeating it through his resurrection, Jesus guaranteed the lifting of the Curse from mankind and from the earth.
- The removal of the Curse will be as thorough and sweeping as the redemptive work of Christ. In bringing us salvation, Christ has already undone some of the damage in our hearts,

but in the end he will finally and completely restore his entire creation to what God originally intended.

*Romans 8:19-20 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

- Resurrection means that we will have bodies. If we didn't have bodies we wouldn't be resurrected. A non-physical resurrection is like a sunless sunrise. All creation will reap the results of our resurrection.

*Romans 8: 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

If we take literally the earthly depictions of life on the New Earth, it allows us to make a direct connection with our current lives. When I'm eating with people here, enjoying food and fellowship, it's a bridge to when I'll be eating there, enjoying food and fellowship. This isn't making a leap into dark of a shadowy afterlife; it's just taking a few natural steps in the light of scripture gives us. Every joy on earth, including the joy of reunion, is an inkling, a whisper of greater joy. The beauty of this earth is just rough sketches of the New Earth.

- The Lord will restore all things to what He originally intended them to be. Just as we look forward to our redemption in Christ, all creation looks forward to being renewed as well. This will be a new beginning, a new genesis, a coming back from death to life.

*Matthew 19:28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

- We shouldn't however think that the New Earth will be a start over with Eden's original paradise. However, Scripture demonstrates otherwise. The New earth, as we've seen, includes a carryover of culture and nations. History won't start over with the New earth any more than history started over when Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden. Eden was part of history. There was direct continuity from the pre-fall world to the post-fall world. Similarly there will be direct continuity between the dying old earth and the resurrected New Earth. The earthshaking Fall divided history, but it didn't end history. The resurrection of all things will divide Earth's history, but it won't end it. Culture won't regress to Eden, where musical instruments hadn't yet been invented or where metalworking and countless other skills hadn't yet been developed

*Isaiah 51:3 For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.*

*Ezekiel 36:35 So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.'*

- Our days on earth are often burdened with troubles and frustrations but seeing a vision of the New Earth can encourage us while we finish our days here. Think of what aspect of the New Earth you can focus on to encourage you in the midst of your daily circumstances.
- All creation is under the curse, yet the Lord said, *The glory of the Lord fills the whole earth* (Numbers 14:21) God's glorious display will be even greater after the redemption of all creation

*Isaiah 40:5 The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

Isaiah 11:9-10 speak of how glorious it will be when the nations rally to the Lord at the Holy Mountain.

*Isaiah 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. **10** "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."*

- The cross and the resurrection of Jesus make the restoration of mankind and all of creation possible. Just as in Christ we are reconciled to God because he reversed the curse, God will also redeem the whole earth and all of creation according to scripture.

*Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

- Even though our depravity means we have no virtue that makes us worthy of our standing before God, we are never the less "made in God's likeness". Some things we do even in fallenness, such as painting, building, performing beautiful music, finding cures for diseases, and other cultural, scientific, commercial and aesthetic pursuits are good.

***1 Corinthians 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.***

- This tells us that we, being perishable, must put on immortality. This speaks of our bodies being made new, becoming immortal. But it doesn't mean that we are not the very same people who will also walk the New Earth



- I always thought that we would all be beautiful in our new bodies, but if people are going to be able to recognize me there is no way I'll be beautiful. I believe what is going to happen we will look at each other as God sees us and because of that we will be beautiful.

*1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees;<sup>[1]</sup> for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

- God promises us new resurrected bodies when Christ returns because of the work he did on the cross in our place. Christ's resurrection is the prototype for the resurrection of mankind and the earth. The empty tomb is the ultimate proof that Christ's resurrection body was the same body that died on the cross. If resurrection meant the creation of a new body, Christ's original body would have remained in the tomb.
- When Jesus said to his disciples after his resurrection, "It is I myself," he was emphasizing to them that he was the same person, in spirit and body, who had gone to the cross. His disciples saw the marks of his crucifixion, unmistakable evidence that this was the same body. Jesus said

*John 2:19 "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.*

- Jesus walked the Earth in his resurrected body for forty days, showing us how we would live as resurrected human beings. In effect, he also demonstrated where we would live as resurrected human beings, on Earth. Christ's resurrected body was suited for life on Earth, not primarily life in the present Heaven. As Jesus was raised to come back to live on Earth, so we will be raised to come back to live on Earth.

*Philippians 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

*1 Thessalonians 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.*

- In the book the Last Battle, C.S. Lewis portrays the girl Lucy as she mourns the loss of Narnia, a great world created by Aslan, a beloved world that she assumed had been forever destroyed. Jewel the unicorn mourns too, calling his beloved Narnia, "The only world I ever known." Although Lucy and her family and friends are on the threshold of Aslan's country, she still looks back at Narnia and feels a profound loss. But as she gets deeper into Aslan's country, she notices something totally unexpected. What happens next reflects the biblical revelation of the New Earth.

“Those hills,” said Lucy, “the nice woody ones and the blue ones behind, aren’t they very like the southern border of Narnia.”

“Like,” cried Edmund after a moment’s silence. “Why they’re exactly like. Look there’s Mount Pire with the forked head, and there’s the pass into Archenland and everything.”

“And yet they’re not like.” Said Lucy. “They’re different. They have more colors on them and they look further away than I remembered and they’re more, more, oh I don’t know.”

“More like the real thing,” said the Lord Digory softly. Suddenly Farsight the Eagle spread his wings soared thirty or forty feet up in the air, circled round and then lightened on the ground.

“Kings and Queens,” he cried, “we have all been blind. We are only beginning to see where we are. From up there, I have seen it all, Ettinsmuir, Beaversdam, the Great River, and Cair Paravel still shining on the edge of the Eastern Sea. Narnia is not dead. This is Narnia.”

“But how can it be?” said Peter. “For Aslan told us older ones that we should never return to Narnia and here we are.

“Yes,” said Eustace, “And we saw it destroyed and the sun put out.”

“And it’s all different,” said Lucy.

“The Eagle is right,” said Lord Digory. “Listen, Peter. When Aslan said you could never go back to Narnia, he meant the Narnia you were thinking of, but that was not the real Narnia. That had a beginning and an end. It was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia, which has always been here and always will be here, just as our own world, England and all, is only a shadow or copy of something in Aslan’s real world. You need not mourn over Narnia, Lucy. All of the old Narnia that mattered, all the dear creatures, have been drawn into the real Narnia through the Door. And of course it is different, as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as waking life is from a dream.

The difference between the old Narnia and the new Narnia was like that. The new one was a deeper country, every rock and flower and blade of grass looked as if it meant more. I can’t describe it any better than that, if you ever get there, you’ll know what I mean.

It was the unicorn who summed up what everyone was feeling. He stamped his right fore hoof on the ground and neighed and then cried: “I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all of my life, though I never knew it till now. The reason why we loved Narnia is that it sometimes looked a little like this.”

## Scriptures

*1 Corinthians 15:17-19 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! **18** Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **19** If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.*

*1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*

*1 Corinthians 15:42-44 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. **43** It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. **44** It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

*1 Corinthians 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*

*1 Corinthians 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

*1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.*

*Thessalonians 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.*

*2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

*Acts 3:21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

*Colossians 1:16-20 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. **17** And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. **18** And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. **19** For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, **20** and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*

*Daniel 12:3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.*

*Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*

*Ephesians 1:10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.*

*Isaiah 11:9-10 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. **10** "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."*

*Isaiah 40:5 The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

*Job 19:26-27 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, **27** Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

*Luke 9:29-31 As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. **30** And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, **31** who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*

*Luke 24:39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."*

*Matthew 13:43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

*Matthew 19:28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

*Numbers 14:21 but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD—*

*Philippians 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

*Romans 8:19-23 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; **21** because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. **23** Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

*Revelation 21:4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

## REFLECTIONS

### Day 15 – The Coming “Renewal of all Things”

The Lord will restore all things to what He originally intended them to be. Just as we look forward to our redemption in Christ, all creation looks forward to being renewed as well. This will be a new beginning, a new genesis a coming back from death to life.

*Matthew 19:28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

**Reflection:** God’s stated purpose for us is to rule over the earth forever. In the end Christ will renew all things. How do these truths help you face the challenges of today?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 16 – A Vision of the New Earth

The words of Isaiah 60 describe the New Earth with the very same words as Revelation 21-22. These verses speak of unprecedented rejoicing, “Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy.”

*Isaiah 60:11 Therefore your gates shall be open continually; They shall not be shut day or night, That men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, And their kings in procession.*

*Isaiah 60:15 "Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, So that no one went through you, I will make you an eternal excellence, A joy of many generations.*

**Reflection:** our days on earth are often burdened with troubles and frustrations but seeing a vision of the New Earth can encourage us while we finish our days here. What aspect of the New Earth can you focus on to encourage you in the midst of your daily circumstances?

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 17 – God’s Glory on God’s Earth**

All creation is under the curse, yet the Lord said, The glory of the Lord fills the whole earth (Numbers 14:21). God’s glorious display will be even greater after the redemption of all creation. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Isaiah 40:5 and Isaiah 11:9-10 speak of how glorious it will be when the nations rally to the Lord at His holy mountain.

*Isaiah 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. 10 "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."*

**Reflection:** When you think of God’s glory on earth, what do you envision? How do you think seeing the glory of the Lord will change your experience with Him?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 18 – The Curse Reversed

The cross and the resurrection of Jesus make the restoration of mankind and all of creation possible. Just as in Christ we are reconciled to God because he reversed the curse, God will also redeem the whole earth and all of creation according to *Romans 8:18-19, I consider that our present suffering are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.*

***Revelations 22:3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.***

**Reflection:** What aspect of the curse being reversed means the most to you and why?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 19 – Our Old Bodies Made New

Corinthians 15:53 tells us that we, being perishable, Must put on immortality. This speaks of our bodies being made new, becoming immortal. But it doesn't mean that we are not the very same people who will also walk the New earth.

*1 Corinthians 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

**Reflection:** As you think about the resurrection and our bodies being made imperishable, what changes do you consider to be most exciting or that you most look forward to personally experiencing?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 20 – Christ’s Resurrection Body: The Model of Ours

God promises us new resurrected bodies when Christ returns because of the work he did on the cross in our place. Christ’s resurrection is the prototype for the resurrection of mankind and the earth.

*Philippians 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

**Reflection:** How is your view of your future body affected by Christ’s bodily resurrection? What do you think life on the New earth will be like based on your view of Christ’s bodily resurrection?

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## WEEK 4 REIGNING AND RULING

- Another of God's attributes is forgiveness. Not only forgiving us but, showing us the importance of forgiving others. If you feel as if you have done something so bad that God won't forgive you, you're wrong.
- God has forgiven us and He commands that we forgive each other.

*Matthew 6:14-15 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

*Matthew 18:21-22 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" **22** Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."*

*Mark 11:25-26 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. **26** But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."*

*Luke 6:37 "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."*

*Luke 11:4 And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one."*

*Luke 17:3-4 Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. **4** And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."*

- Over the last 3 weeks we have gotten a clearer picture of what the New Earth, Heaven will look like. So what are we going to be doing?
- A Pastor once confessed, "Whenever I think about Heaven, it makes me depressed. I'd rather cease to exist when I die. When asked he said, "I can't stand the thought of the endless tedium. To flout around in the clouds with nothing to do but strum a harp. As we have looked at the attributes of God we can see He has something so special for us and He desires to be with us and floating around doesn't make any sense. In 2 Timothy 2: 11-12 it tells us something we are called to do.

*2 Timothy 2:11-12 This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. **12** If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.*

**What is required to reign with Christ forever \_\_\_\_\_**

*Revelation 5:10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."*

- C.S. Lewis said, “If I find myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”
- Haven’t we all felt out of place at times, even when things seem to be going well? This is because things are not currently what God originally intended them to be. But the perfect earth is coming and Jesus Christ is going to be the King of Kings over the New Earth. We will reign with him over the earth, kings and queens under him, stewarding his creation for eternity
- Most people do not feel satisfied and fulfilled no matter how much they have or how busy they are. That’s because God designed us for something more.
- Depression can be caused by trying to find joy or purpose that only God can fill with the things of this world. Look at all the actors, actresses, athletes, millionaires, etc. that are taking drugs or going as far as committing suicide they spent all their life looking for something they could have asked for at any time.

*2 Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

*Hebrews 13:14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.*

- We are homesick for Eden. We’re nostalgic for what is implanted in our hearts. It’s built into us, perhaps even at a genetic level. We long for what the first man and woman enjoyed, a perfect and beautiful Earth with free and untainted relationships with God, each other, animals, and our environment. Every attempt at human progress has been an attempt to overcome what was lost in the fall.
- Our ancestors came from Eden. We are headed toward a New Earth. Meanwhile we live out our lives on a sin-corrupted earth, between Eden and the New Earth, but we must never forget that this is not our natural state. Sin and death and suffering and war and poverty are not natural, they are the divesting result of our rebellion against God.
- We long for a return to paradise, a perfect world, without the corruption of sin, where God walks with us and talks with us in the cool of the day. Because we’re human beings, we desire something tangible and physical something that will not fade away. And that is exactly what God promises us, a home that will not be destroyed, a kingdom that will not fade away, a city with unshakable foundations, and an incorruptible inheritance.
- Adam was formed from the dust of the earth, forever establishing our connection to the earth. Just as we are made from the earth, so too we are made for the earth. But, you may object, Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for us and would take us there to live with Him

forever. Yes, but what is that place? Revelations 21 makes it clear, it's the New Earth. That's where the New Jerusalem will reside when it comes down out of Heaven. Only then will we be truly home.

- This world is not perfect; nor will we see all God has planned for us here.

*Hebrews 11:39-40 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, **40** God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*

**What does Hebrews say that helps us understand what God has planned for us? \_\_\_\_\_**

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*Daniel 7:13-14 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. **14** Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.*

- One thing we will be doing in Heaven is reigning with Christ. Ruling may not sound like Heaven; the leadership that is required may seem too much like work. But from God's perspective leadership is about serving, and service is a reward, not a punishment.

*Daniel 7:17-18 "Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. **18** But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'*

- Because the four pagan kingdoms are on Earth, the implication is that the fifth kingdom, God's eternal kingdom, will also be on earth. A kingdom that will be everlasting and will not pass away and will never be destroyed. The Kingdom with the everlasting dominion is not a dominion over a different realm but over the same realm, Earth. In speaking of these kingdoms, God is not comparing apples (Earth) to oranges (spiritual realm), but apples to apples. Christ will not merely destroy the earth where fallen kings once ruled. Rather, he will rule over the same earth, transformed and new.
- The angel tells Daniel that the four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. Then the angel makes an extraordinary statement verse 18. This statement makes clear both the kingdom's location (Earth) and its duration (eternal)
- Under God's covenant with Israel, the people never looked for the Messiah to reign in Heaven. That would be nothing new, because God already reigns in Heaven. Establishing God's kingdom was never about an immaterial spirit realm. It always concerned the one place in the universe made for mankind, the one place where God's reign has been disputed, earth.

- God has never abandoned his original plan that righteous human beings will inhabit and rule the earth. That's not merely an argument from silence. Daniel 7:22 explicitly reveals that the saints of the most High will receive the Kingdom and will possess it forever. What is the Kingdom? Earth.

*Daniel 7:21-22 I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, **22** until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.*

- God' plan comes to a conclusion after the final judgment, when King Jesus says.

*Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

- Where is His Kingdom? Exactly where it has been from the beginning, Earth.
- The same earthly kingdom ruled by ungodly human beings will ultimately be ruled by godly human beings. Christ's promise wasn't figurative. The meek really will inherit the earth and they will rule what they inherited.
- Christ will restore us to the throne occupied so briefly by Adam and Eve. He will hand over to us the kingdom. He said to his disciples,

*Luke 12:32 Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

- God is glorified when we take our rightful, intended place in his creation and exercise the dominion that he bestowed on us. God appointed human beings to rule the earth..

*Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

- All of us will have some responsibility in which we serve God. Scripture teaches that our service for Him now on Earth will be evaluated to help determine how we'll serve him on the New Earth. The humble servant will be put in charge of much, whereas the one who lords over others in the present world will have power taken away.

*Luke 14:11 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

- If we serve faithfully on the present Earth, God will give us permanent management positions on the New Earth.



*Luke 16:10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.*

- The Owner has his eye on us, if we prove faithful, he'll be pleased to entrust more to us.
- On the new earth, God will give us renewed minds and marvelously constructed bodies. We'll be whole people, full of energy and vision. The work on the New Earth will be adapted to each one's special aptitude and powers. It will be the work that we can do best, work that will give us the most satisfaction. Even now under the curse, we catch glimpses of how work can be enriching, how it can build relationships, and how it can help us to improve. Work stretches us in ways that makes us smarter, wiser and more fulfilled. The God who created us to do good works will not cancel this purpose when he resurrects us to inhabit the new universe. The Bible's picture of resurrected people at work in a vibrant society on a resurrected Earth couldn't be more compelling. We're going to help God run the universe. One of my gifts is food service whether organizing a large event or simply cooking it seems to come naturally. Even though at work I get mechanical with this gift, but when I'm serving in God's name a joy comes over me and at times I feel I'm cooking with Jesus.
- We're told that we will serve God in Heaven. Service is active, not passive. It involves fulfilling responsibilities in which we expend energy. Work in Heaven won't be frustrating or fruitless, instead, it will involve lasting accomplishment, unhindered by decay and fatigue, enhanced by unlimited resources. We'll approach our work with the enthusiasm we bring to our favorite sport or hobby. The following are some verses describing work:

*2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.*

*Colossians 3:23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,*

*2 Timothy 2:21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.*

*Hebrews 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

*1 Peter 1:17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;*

*Revelation 2:2 I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;*

- How important is service to Jesus he promises he will even serve us.

*Luke 12:36-37 Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.*

- This is an amazing passage because; Jesus says He will become a servant to servants. Why, because He loves us and also to show his appreciation for our loyalty and service to Him. The King becomes a servant, making the servants kings.
- In Heaven we'll reign with Christ, exercise leadership and authority, and make important decisions. This implies we'll be given specific responsibilities by our leaders and we'll delegate specific responsibilities to those under our leadership. We'll set goals, devise plans and share ideas. Our best work days on the present Earth, those days when everything turns out better than we planned, when we get everything done on time, and when everyone on the team pulls together and enjoys each other are just a foretaste of the joy our work will bring on the New earth. The work we'll be doing is the work we were created to do, the work that will bring us the most joy.

*2 Timothy 2:12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.*

*Revelation 22:5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*

*Psalms 8:6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,*

- What will it be like to perform a task, to build and create, knowing that what we're doing will last? What will it be like to be always gaining skills, so that our best work will always be ahead of us? Because our minds and bodies will never fade and because we will never lack resources or opportunity, our work won't degenerate. Buildings won't last for only fifty years, and books won't be in print for only twenty years. They'll last forever.

*Leviticus 26:11,12 I will put my dwelling place among you...I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.*

*Daniel 7:14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.*

- This scripture is clear that God will dwell with us in Heaven, on the New Earth. We won't just see Him, he will actually walk with us, implying relationship and interaction with him.

Jesus wants us with him, how wonderful it is to be wanted by our Savior. Think of it, God will be the most important and most fascinating person we'll ever meet in Heaven and we can get to know him here and now.

- Will Heaven be boring? God created our desires for pleasures and the experience of joy, he made our taste buds, adrenaline and the nerve endings that convey pleasure to our brains. Likewise our imaginations and our capacity for joy and exhilaration were made by God. Sometimes we're so arrogant to think that we created fun. On this earth we sometimes think to be good is to be boring and to sin is fun. Sin doesn't make life interesting, it makes it empty. Where there's fulfillment, when there's beauty, when we see God as He truly is, an endless reservoir of fascination, boredom becomes impossible. God promises that we'll laugh, rejoice and experience endless pleasures in Heaven. I know for me my most exciting and rewarding times on this earth have been doing things that I know honor God, being with his children, serving, doing outreaches and helping others. God has called us to enter heaven as children, expecting to enjoy ourselves with wide eyed amazements
- God's kingdom and dominion are not about what happens in some remote, unearthly place; instead, they are about what happens on earth, which God created for his glory. God has tied his glory to the earth, and everything connected with it; mankind, animals, trees, rivers, everything.
- God's glory is manifested in his creation. The earth is not disposable. It is essential to God's plan. God promises that ultimately the whole earth will be filled with his glory. God has his hands on the earth. He will not let go, even when it requires that his hands be pierced by nails. Both his incarnation and those nails secured him to earth and its eternal future. In a redemptive work far larger than most imagine, Christ bought and paid for our future and the earth's.

*Isaiah 6:3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"*

- However we need to be sure that our names are written in the book of life and the only way is through Jesus.

*John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

*Romans 10:7-10 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): **9** that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

*John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

*1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

*Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**What do you think ruling with Christ will look like. What skills and abilities do you have that might be utilized in the New earth? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**How did you picture heaven prior to this study? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**How has your perspective changed since beginning this study? \_\_\_\_\_**

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## Scriptures

*1 Corinthians 6:2-3 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? **3** Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?*

*2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."*

*2 Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

*2 Timothy 2:12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.*

*2 Timothy 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

*Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.*

*Daniel 7:14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.*

*Daniel 12:13 But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."*

*Genesis 1:28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

*Hebrews 11:13-16 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. **14** For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. **15** And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16** But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

*John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*

*Leviticus 26:11-12 I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. **12** I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.*

*Luke 19:17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'*

*Luke 22:29-30 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, **30** that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

*Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*

*Matthew 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Matthew 5:12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

*Matthew 25:20-21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

*Proverbs 10:30 The righteous will never be removed, But the wicked will not inhabit the earth.*

*Psalms 8:6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,*

*Psalms 37:9-11 For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. **10** For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. **11** But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

*Revelation 3:12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.*

*Revelation 3:21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

*Revelation 7:14-15 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. **15** Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.*

*Zechariah 14:9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be-- "The LORD is one," And His name one.*

REFLECTIONS

Day 22 – What the “New” in “New Earth” Means

Since God made us for earth he will make our final destination the New Earth. Just as God will make us new in the final resurrection, he will also renew the earth. This New earth will be just as God originally made the earth we live in now. It will be perfect like the Garden of Eden. We will be able to enjoy nature as we've never seen it before, a reflection of God and his glory.

*Revelations 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

**Reflection:** People may feel confused about what the term, new earth, means. How would you explain the New Earth to someone?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 23 – Homesick for Heaven

We all know what it means to be homesick. We want to be where things are comfortable and familiar. Likewise, our longing for Heaven is really a desire for earth as it should be—as God originally intended it to be. This desire is both biblical and right. The place we long for, “an earth where God is fully glorified, is the very place where we will live forever.”

***2 Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.***

**Reflection:** Have you felt an unexplainable longing that hasn’t been fulfilled? Could it be that you are longing for Heaven?

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 24 – The Joy of Living with God Forever**

The scripture is clear that God will dwell with us in Heaven on the New Earth. We won’t just see Him; He will actually walk with us, implying relationship and interaction with him. In John 17:24 Jesus prayed, “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am.” Jesus wants us with Him: how wonderful is it to be wanted by our Savior. Think of it, God will be the most important and most fascinating person we’ll ever meet in Heaven and we can get to know Him here and now.

*Leviticus 26:11 I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. 12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.*

**Reflection:** We can get to know God now by developing our relationship with him. What are you doing to get to know God better? What else can you do?

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## REFLECTIONS

### **Day 25** – Promised Land, Promised Earth: The New Earth vs. The Millennium

Scripture is loaded with promises and glimpses of our place, dwelling, and role in eternity. In Jesus' day the thing that thrilled expectant believers was their hope that one day God would rule on the earth. The millennium question relates to whether the old earth will end soon after Christ returns, or a thousand years later. Regardless, when the old earth ends, the New earth will begin and last forever. This is the believer's inheritance.

*Psalms 37:10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

**Reflection:** How does the promise of an imperishable inheritance on the New Earth give you hope for the future?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 26 – The Kingdom of Kingdoms

God created Adam and Eve to rule over the earth, but because of their failure Jesus came as a man and became the new head of the human race. Christ will accomplish what Adam and Eve wouldn't. He will rule with His beloved people as his bride and co-rulers. God's desire is to be prepare us now for what we will do forever with Him.

*Daniel 7:14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.*

**Reflection:** What are you doing to get ready to rule the New Earth? God wants to train you and teach you to lean on his strength and wisdom. How are you cooperating with God's plan?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 27 – A Government We’ll Love To Be A Part Of

Those with the greatest responsibility in the New Earth will be those who served Christ well with humility on earth. Because we’ve been conditioned to be skeptical of government as being corrupt and inefficient, we tend to view them with distrust. But in the New Earth we will no longer be skeptical and disillusioned because we will be governed by Christ-like rulers under the gracious governing of Christ himself.

**Luke 22:29** *And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, **30** that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

**Reflection:** What How do you think Christ’s rule in Heaven will be different than His rule today? What do you most look forward to on the New Earth under Christ’s rule?

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 28 – Where Bellmen and Cleaning Ladies Will Rule**

Ruling and reigning may not sound appealing at first, especially if you dislike your work. You may think that ruling doesn't sound like Heaven. From God's perspective leadership is about serving, and service is a reward, not a punishment. The more we serve Christ now, the greater our capacity will be to serve him in Heaven.

***1 Peter 5:5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,***

**Reflection:** Who do you know that exemplifies humble service? How do the actions of the person reveal their humility? What are your thoughts about the humble servants of Christ being lifted up in the eternal kingdom?

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## WEEK 5 GLIMPSES INTO HEAVEN

- How are we to show God's grace to others.

*Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

*John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

*Acts 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."*

*Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*

*Revelation 21:5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

- No doubt our God is creative. Just look at the world around us. There are over 4,600 recognized species of mammals alone, not to mention the countless numbers of other animals plants and insects that span the globe. There are majestic mountains, soaring waterfalls, gorgeous desert sunsets and oceans teeming with vibrant life. Some people might even refer to a few places on this earth as paradise, but no matter how beautiful this world is, it remains just a shadow of what is to come on the New earth
- Since Adam and Eve's original sin, all of creation has been living under a curse. But God promises us a new heavens and a new earth upon which we will live without sin in the perfect creation he intended for us since the beginning. Now however we are living under the curse.
- In order to get a glimpse into the New Earth, we must take a close look at the present earth. The people around us, the earth's natural wonders and the joys of life are all but shadows of what the earth once was and foretastes of what yet will be when it is renewed. On the New Earth, we will see this present earth in its unfallen state, full of all the good things of God's natural creation enhanced into something far greater than we've ever seen or experienced before.
- The life on the New Earth according to Isaiah

*Isaiah 65:17-25 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. **18** But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For*

*behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. 20 "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. 24 "It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.*

- The best parts of this world are just sneak peeks of the New. Even though God said no eye as seen or ear has heard for what He has in store for us, He still has given us an imagination to use. Picture flowers not wilted, grass not dying, the blue sky without pollution. People smiling and joyful, not angry or depressed. Stop and imagine the most beautiful place you have been on this earth. Think of friends or family members who loved Jesus and are with him now. Picture them with you, walking together in this place. All of you have powerful bodies, stronger than those of an Olympic athlete. You're laughing, playing, talking and reminiscing. You reach up to the tree to pick an apple or orange and you take a bite. It's so sweet that it's startling. You've never tasted anything so good. Now you see someone coming toward you. It's Jesus with a big smile on his face. You fall to your knees in worship. He pulls you up and embraces you. At last you're with the person you were made for, in the place you were made to be. Everywhere you go there will be new people and places to enjoy, new things to discover. What's that you smell. A feast. A party's ahead, and you're invited. There's exploration and work to be done, and you can't wait to get started.
- The empty tomb is the ultimate proof that Jesus' body was the same body that died on the cross. If resurrection meant the creation of a new body, Jesus' original body would have remained in the tomb. When Jesus said to his disciples after his resurrection, "It is myself," he was emphasizing to. His disciples saw the marks of his crucifixion, unmistakable evidence that this was the same body. them that he was the same person, in spirit and body, who had gone to the cross (Luke 24:39) Jesus asked in his resurrected body

*Luke 24:39-43 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and ate in their presence.*

*Acts 10:39-41 Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.*



*Luke 22:18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."*

- Paul says that not only we but the whole creation awaits the earth wide deliverance that will come with our bodily resurrection. Not only mankind in general but believers in particular are aligned with the rest of creation, which intuitively reaches out to God for deliverance. We know what God intended for mankind and the earth and therefore we have an object for our longing. We groan for what creation groans for, redemption. God subjected the whole creation to frustration by putting the curse not only on mankind, but also on the earth. Why? Because human beings and the earth are inseparably linked. And as together we fell, together we shall rise. God will transform the fallen human race into a renewed human race and the present Earth into the New earth.

*Romans 8:19-23 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; **21** because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. **23** Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

- Just think the plants aren't as beautiful because of the curse on the land or the mountains, the lakes or the animals. Everything is going to be so much more beautiful, that we can imagine.
- Our lives in Heaven will include rest and it's hard to get true rest on this earth. Nights we stir because of our thoughts and bad dreams. Even on vacation we are thinking of when we get back to work and our daily grind. We have never known true rest here, but on the New Earth our minds will be full of joy and peace and rest will be a natural way of life instead of a struggle to get some.

*Hebrews 4:9-10 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. **10** For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.*

*Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

- According to scripture we will be eating at feasts on the New Earth in the company of our new family telling stories and laughing with our Lord.

*Revelation 19:9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

- Yet another biblical passage gives us insight about banquets in Heaven.

*Luke 14:12-14 Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. **13** But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. **14** And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."*

- When Jesus made this reference to the resurrection of the dead, a man at the same dinner said to him

*Luke 14:15 Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"*

- Since they were eating together at the time, the obvious meaning of eat and feast is literal. If the man who said this was wrong to envision literal eating after the bodily resurrection, Jesus had every opportunity to correct him. But he didn't. In fact, he built on the man's words to tell a story about someone who prepared a banquet and invited many guests.

*Luke 14:16-24 Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, **17** and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' **18** But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' **19** And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' **20** Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' **21** So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' **22** And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' **23** Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. **24** For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' "*

- Clearly both the man and Jesus were talking about actual eating at actual banquets, like the one they were at.
- Only two people have ever eaten food at its best, with their capacity to taste at its best. The great wine Christ made and served at the wedding of Cana was a foretaste of the best of wines he will provide for us on the New Earth. Even in this curse world, Scripture is filled with more feasts than fasts. Who created our taste buds? Who determined what we like and what we don't? God did. The food we eat is from God's Hand. Our resurrected bodies will have resurrected taste buds. We can trust that the food we eat on the New Earth, some of it familiar and some of it brand new will taste better than anything we've ever eaten here. One of the first things Jesus did when He returned and was with the disciples was to eat a piece of fish showing we will eat in our resurrected bodies.

- We won't need fine meals, we don't need them now. But we enjoy them now for the same reason we'll enjoy them then, because God made us to enjoy them and to glorify him as we eat and drink. It however looks like we will be vegetarians since there is no more death.

*1 Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

- Some think when we get our new body that we will know everything, but that is not what scripture shows it says we'll be learning through all of eternity.

*Ephesians 2:5-7 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

*1 Corinthians 13:12 (NLT) Now we see things imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.*

*Ephesians 2:5-7 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

- The word show means to reveal. The phrase in the coming ages clearly indicates this will be a progressive, ongoing revelation, in which we learn more and more about God's grace.
- Jesus said to his disciples, "Learn from me." On the New earth, we'll have the privilege of sitting at Jesus' feet as Mary did; walking with him over the countryside as his disciples did, always learning from him. In Heaven we'll continually learn new things about God, going ever deeper in our understanding. Can you image going for walks with Jesus and just talking with Him as He tells us new things and why he loves us so much.
- Besides learning from Jesus think of all the people that we will be surrounded with, Abraham Lincoln, Mother Theresa, Billy Graham, Peter, Moses the list is going to be endless, we hope. Is there someone you would like to talk with when we get there?
- A central part of our bodily resurrection will be the continuity of our identity. We will be ourselves in Heaven. We will become like Jesus in character, yet remain the distinct individuals he delighted in creating.

*Isaiah 66:22 "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain.*

- Scripture suggests that people and animals are both unique living beings, created by God and included in the everlasting covenant promise.

*Genesis 9:9-17 "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, **10** and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. **11** Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." **12** And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: **13** I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. **14** It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; **15** and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. **16** The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." **17** And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."*

- Like humans, animals were formed from the ground.

*Genesis 2:19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.*

- When God breathed a spirit into Adam's body, made from the earth, Adam became nephesh, a living being or soul. Remarkably, the same Hebrew word, nephesh, is used for animals and for people. We are specifically told that not only people, but animals have the, "breath of life," in them. God handmade animals, linking them both to the earth and humanity.
- While animals are not said to have eternal souls, God is their maker and he promises to make "all things new" (Revelations 21:5). He also says the "whole creation" is groaning awaiting redemption. Since there is biblical reason to believe animals will be on the New Earth, couldn't God easily recreate our beloved pets to be among them

*Romans 8:22-23 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. **23** Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

- God uses animals to fulfill his purposes. He ordered Ravens to feed Elijah.

*1 Kings 17:4 And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."*

- He provided a great fish to swallow Jonah.

*Jonah 1:17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*

- He sent a fish with a coin in his mouth to teach his disciples a lesson.

*Matthew 17:27 Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."*

- The story of Balaam and his donkey. God sends an angel to stop Balaam from doing evil. Balaam doesn't see the angel, but the donkey does. She veers off the road, and Balaam beats her. The donkey sees the angel two more times. Each time she veers off, and each time Balaam beats her.

*Numbers 22:28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"*

- The wording doesn't suggest God puts words in the donkey's mouth, but that he opened the donkey's mouth, permitting her to verbalize what appear to be actual thoughts and feelings. Finally God opens Balaam's eyes to see the angel, who asks him.

*Numbers 22:32-33 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me. **33** The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live."*

- The angel says the donkey saved Balaam's life. If she hadn't, the angel would've killed Balaam while saving the donkey. God sometimes protects animals while judging their human masters. Animals, it appears, can have thoughts and feelings and can be responsive to realities in the spiritual realm that people are blind to.
- When God sent Jonah to rescue Nineveh, God expressed his concern not only for the people, but for its many cattle.

*Jonah 4:11 And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left--and much livestock?"*

- After Jonah warned Nineveh of their coming destruction, the king commanded his people.

*Jonah 3:7-8 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. **8** But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.*

- God's care for animals even appears in the Ten Commandments.

*Exodus 20:9-10 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.*

- That's why the question of whether pets will be in Heaven is not as some assume, stupid. Animals aren't nearly as valuable as people, but God is their Maker and has touched many people's lives through them. It would be simple for Him to recreate a pet in Heaven if He wants to. He's the giver of all good gifts, not the taker of them. If it would please us to have a pet restored to the New earth, that might be sufficient reason. Consider parents who have given a pet because of a child's request. God is better than we are at giving good gifts to his children. When we find happiness in God's creation, we find happiness in Him. ? This is why we need to know the nature of God, wouldn't He show you how much he cares for you by bringing back a pet that you loved on this earth. Believe heaven will lack nothing that is good for us.
- If we regard pets as God created companions entrusted to our care, it's only right that we should experience grief at their loss. Who made endearing qualities in animals? God. Who made us to be touched by them? God. Do we love animals because of sin and the curse? No. We love animals because God created us to love them.

## Scriptures

*1 Corinthians 6:20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

*1 Peter 1:12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into.*

*1 Timothy 6:17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*

*Ephesians 2:6-7 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7** that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

*Ezekiel 36:35 So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.'*

*Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

*Isaiah 11:6-9 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. **7** The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. **8** The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. **9** They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.*

*Isaiah 51:3 For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.*

*Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.*

*Isaiah 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.*

*Isaiah 66:22 "For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain.*

*Job 19:26-27 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, **27** Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

*Luke 19:17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'*

*Luke 22:18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."*

*Luke 22:29-30 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, **30** that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

*Luke 24:39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."*

*Matthew 8:11 And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*

*Matthew 16:25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

*Philippians 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

*Revelation 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." '*

*Revelation 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." '*

*Revelation 21:4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

*Revelation 21:9-11 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, **11** having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.*

*Revelation 21:27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

*Revelation 22:1-2 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. **2** In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*



## REFLECTIONS

### Day 29 – The New Earth: A Greater Eden

In order to get a glimpse into the New Earth, we must take a close look at the present earth. The people around us, the earth's natural wonders and the joys of life are all but shadows of what the earth once was and foretastes of what it yet will be when it's renewed. On the New earth, we will see this present earth in its un-fallen state, full of all the good things of God's natural creation enhanced into something far greater than we've ever seen or experienced before.

*Isaiah 51:3 For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.*

**Reflection:** What are some of the good things from God's natural creation or from your own life that you'd like to see God Carry over to the New Earth?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 30 – Animals on the New Earth

Scripture suggests that people and animals are both unique living beings, created by God and included in the everlasting covenant promise.

*Genesis 9:17 And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."*

**Reflection:** Consider God’s creative work in animals. Why do you think He counted them important enough to include in his covenant promise?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 31 – Animals We Love Might Live Again

While animals are not said to have eternal souls, God is their maker and he promises to make “all things new” (Revelations 21:5). He also says the “whole creation” is groaning awaiting redemption. Since there is biblical reason to believe animals will be on the New Earth, couldn’t God easily recreate our beloved pets to be among them?

*Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. <sup>23</sup> Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

**Reflection:** How has God used a pet in your life? What attributes of God are you reminded of?

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 32 – The New Jerusalem**

The Bible describes the magnificence of the New Jerusalem in great detail saying, *It shone with glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.* Revelations 21:10-11. Amid the glorious architecture and beautiful natural wonders on the New Earth, we'll have everything we need for strength, vitality and excitement for life. Best of all, no matter where we go or what we do, we'll never leave the presence of the King.

***Revelations 22:3** And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. **4** They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.*

**Reflection:** What about life in the great city appeals to you most? Is there anything you are thankful won't be part of life in the New Jerusalem?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 33 – Being Ourselves in Heaven

A central part of our bodily resurrection will be the continuity of our identity. We will be ourselves in Heaven. We will become like Jesus in character, yet remain the distinct individuals he delighted in creating.

***Isaiah 66:22 "For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain.***

**Reflection:** How can you begin your transformation into the person that God created you to be this side of Heaven?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 34 – Eating and Drinking on the New Earth

Scripture is packed with references to eating, drinking, and feasting in Heaven. God made us to enjoy food and to enjoy celebrating with one another. The same God who delights in our pleasures will be glorified in our grateful praise.

*1 Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

**Reflection:** God wants us to look forward to eating at His table in His kingdom. Imagine and describe what it might be like to share a meal or a cup of coffee or tea with your Savior.

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 35 – Knowing and Learning**

God alone is omniscient. When we join our Lord in Heaven, we will gain clarity and understanding but we will remain finite, limited beings. We will not experience sudden and complete knowledge but a gradual, progressive and ongoing revelation of God’s grace.

*1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

**Reflection:** What do you wish you knew now that you anticipate learning in Heaven?

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## WEEK 6 RELATIONSHIPS IN HEAVEN

- A God we can trust
- Nowhere in the Bible does it say to trust each other. It tells us to love, to take one another's burdens, to forgive, to care for, but not trust, even though we should be trustworthy.

*Psalms 118:8 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man.*

*Jeremiah 9:4 "Everyone take heed to his neighbor, And do not trust any brother; For every brother will utterly supplant, And every neighbor will walk with slanderers.*

*Micah 7:5 Do not trust in a friend; Do not put your confidence in a companion; Guard the doors of your mouth From her who lies in your bosom.*

*Psalms 146:3 Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.*

- So much pain is caused, because we put or trust in someone and was let down. How many marriages, business partners and friendships have been destroyed by misplaced trust.
- There is only one that can be trusted all of the time and that is our Lord. Jesus is the one we need to turn to and put our trust in him and let him guide us.

*Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

*2 Samuel 22:3 The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence.*

*1 Chronicles 5:20 And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all who were with them, for they cried out to God in the battle. He heeded their prayer, because they put their trust in Him.*

*Psalms 5:11 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You.*

*Psalms 9:10 And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.*

*Psalms 18:2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

*Psalms 18:30 As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.*

*Psalms 37:40 And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, And save them, Because they trust in Him.*



*2 Corinthians 1:8-9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,*

- If you look up the word trust in the concordance you will be amazed how many times it shows up and if it is not saying to trust in the Lord it is telling you not to trust, riches, idols, friends, companions, etc.
- Missionary Amy Carmichael wrote: Shall we know one another in Heaven? Shall we love and remember? I do not think anyone need wonder about this or doubt for a single moment. We are never told we shall, because I expect, it was not necessary to say anything about this which our hearts tell us. We do not need words. For if we think for a minute, we know. Would you be yourself if you did not love and remember?
- We are told that we shall be like our Lord Jesus. Surely this does not mean in holiness only, but in everything, and He knows, loves and remembers. He would not be himself if he did not, and we should not be ourselves if we did not. Jesus whole purpose is about relationships, a relationship with us, that is why He came and died for us so that He can spend all eternity with us. Just think if He didn't want us so badly He could create an entirely different world with new created people.
- In First Thessalonians chapter four, Paul spoke of what we can expect regarding our loved ones after their physical bodies die here on earth. Because of Christ's resurrection we have assurance that our loved ones are not lost to us. We will be reunited with them, we will know them, and we will have continuity from this life in Heaven. Remembering is an aspect of our humanity that we can count on when we leave earth as it is today.
- Often we refer to the death of a loved one as our loss, but that's not what it says in Thessalonians.

*1 Thessalonians 4:13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. **14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. **15** 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 by no means precede those who are asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

- Charles Spurgeon, a famous Pastor in the mid 1800's gave this account in one of his sermons. "Therefore, let us comfort one another with these words. Did you ever notice, concerning Job's children, that when God gave him twice as much substance as he had

before, he gave him only the same number of children as he formerly had? The Lord gave him twice as much gold and twice as much of all sorts of property, but he only gave him the exact number of children he had before. Why did he not give the patriarch double the number of children as well as twice the number of cattle? Why, because God regarded his children who had died as being Job's still. They were dead to Job's eye, but they were visible to Job's faith. God numbered them still as part of Job's family, and if you carefully count up how many children Job had, you will find that he had twice as many in the end as he had in the beginning. In the same way, consider your friends who are asleep in Christ as still yours, not a single one lost.

- Paul loved people

*1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.*

- Paul anticipates his ongoing relationship with them as part of his heavenly reward:

*1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? **20** For you are our glory and joy.*

- We'll experience all the best of human relationships, with none of the worst. The burdens and tragedies of life will be lifted from us. We'll be free of what displeases God and damages relationships. No Abortion clinics or psychiatric wards. No missing children. No rape or abuse. No drug rehabilitation centers. No bigotry, muggings or killings. No worry, depression or economic downturns. No wars. No unemployment. No anguish over failure and miscommunication. No pretense or wearing masks. No cliques. No hidden agendas, backroom deals, betrayals, secret ambitions, plots or schemes. Imagine meal times full of stories, laughter and joy without fear of insensitivity, inappropriate behavior, anger, gossip, lust, jealousy, hurt feelings or anything that eclipses joy. That will be Heaven.
- For this is proof that we should deeply love others and look forward to being with them in Heaven. Paul sees no contradiction in referring to both Christ and his friends as his hope and joy and crown in Heaven. Paul then asks:

*1 Thessalonians 3:9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, **10** night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?*

- The joy he takes in his friends doesn't compete with his joy in God, it's part of it. Paul thanks God for his friends. Whenever we're moved to thank God for people, we're experiencing exactly what he intended.

- Paul's delight in his brothers in Christ reminds us that the first and second greatest commandments are inseparable:

*Luke 10:27 So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'*

- If you love your neighbor as yourself, how much more your family, which derives its identity from God himself? Can you imagine getting together with your family and truly enjoying each other without any negative emotions or thoughts, just loving each other?

*Philippians 1:7-8 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. 8 For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.*

- Paul's source for his longing and affection for his brothers and sisters is Christ Jesus himself. While putting God over people, this will help find in people a wonderful expression of God himself, so great that it is completely appropriate for us to have them in our hearts, to find joy in them, and too long to be with them. For finding joy in God and longing for God does not kill our joy in and longing for others. Rather, it fuels it. The joy we have for other people is directly derived from our joy in and longing for God.
- Along with family and friends we are going to be friends with angels. Angels the messengers of God. Throughout the Bible they came to earth to tell us what God has planned for us.

*Exodus 23:20 "Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared*

*Luke 1:19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.*

*Genesis 16:11 And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction.*

*Genesis 31:11 Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.'*

*Judges 6:11 Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.*

*Luke 1:28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"*

- I wonder how many things that I've done came from angels since I've been saved? I wrote a book on depression and I seemed to write it effortlessly, maybe I wasn't writing it at all. This study of Heaven came to me from out of nowhere and was placed on my heart and speaking to you now I don't feel alone.
- Can you imagine the stories the angels have to tell about us. I'll be able to sit for hours listening to how they stopped me and kept me alive all these years. Think of how many times the angels might have intervened in your life. In the Psalms it gives us a picture of what the angels in Heaven are like:

*Daniel 6:21-22 Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! **22** My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."*

*Daniel 3:28 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel<sup>[7]</sup> and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!*

*Psalms 103:20-21 Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word. **21** Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.*

- According to Jesus there will be no marriage in Heaven as it is on this earth.

*Matthew 22:30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.*

- The Bible doesn't teach there will be no marriage in Heaven. It says there will be one marriage, between Christ and his bride and we'll be part of it.

*Ephesians 5:31-32 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **32** This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

- The one flesh marital union we know on Earth is a signpost pointing to our relationship with Christ as our bridegroom. Once we reach the destination, the sign post becomes unnecessary. The one marriage, our marriage to Christ, will be so completely satisfying that even the most wonderful earthly marriage couldn't be as fulfilling. Earthly marriage is a shadow of the true and ultimate marriage. Once that ultimate marriage begins, at the Lamb's wedding feast, all the human marriages that pointed to it will have served their noble purpose

and will be assimilated into the one great marriage they foreshadowed. The purpose of marriage is not to replace Heaven, but to prepare for it.

- My wife, Teri is my best friend and closest sister in Christ. I don't see us becoming more distant in Heaven actually just the opposite we'll become closer. Will you and your wife become more distant or closer in the new world? God says "it is not good for man to be alone" he is the giver and blesser of our relationships. Life on this Earth matters. What we do here touches strings that reverberate for all of eternity. Nothing will take away from the fact that Teri and I are marriage partners here and that we invest so much of our lives in each other, serving Christ together. I expect no one but God will understand me better on the New earth and there is nobody besides my Lord whose company I see and enjoy more than Teri's.
- This is the best time to work on your marriage and draw closer to each other. Talk and see what might be stopping you from becoming best friends here on earth. Almost always it's something about this world that is driving you part, finances, misplaced trust, lust, addictions, depression and the list goes on. We look for happiness in this world and when we find our spouse can't deliver then we look for other alternatives, but there is nothing on this earth that will bring us the joy that we seek. This life would be so much better if we can go it with someone else, someone we can love, someone with the same interest in being in our new home. Almost every argument is because of selfish desires, we want to be right no matter what. One thing my wife and I do every night right before going to bed is kneel down and pray together, you'll find someone will join you, the Holy Spirit and will place the things that are on your heart to be shared.
- The joys of marriage will be far greater because of the character and love of our bridegroom. My wife and I will both be married to the most wonderful person in the universe. He's already the one we love most. On earth the closer we draw to him, the closer we draw to each other. The same will be true in Heaven. What an honor it will be to always know that God chose us for each other on this old Earth so that we might have a foretaste of life with Him on the new earth. People with good marriages are each other's best friends and there is no reason to believe they will still be best friends in Heaven. Jesus said the institution of marriage would end, having fulfilled its purpose, but he never hinted that deep relationships between married people would end.
- What about our children? What about other relationships with family and friends? There's every reason to believe we'll pick right up in Heaven with relationships from Earth. We'll also gain many new ones but will continue to deepen the old ones.
- Well we remember our lives here on Earth when we get to Heaven? Remembering without pain and suffering will allow us to have God's perspective of the circumstances we lived through here on earth Jesus promised that in Heaven, those who endured bad things on Earth would be comforted for them. The comfort implies memory of what happened. If we had no memory of the bad things, why would we need comfort? How would we feel it?

*Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.*

- Our minds will be clearer in Heaven, not foggier. Memory is basic to personality. The principle of continuity requires that we will remember our past lives. Heaven cleanses our slate of sin and error, but it doesn't erase our memory of it. The lessons we learn about God's love, grace and justice surely aren't lost but will carry over to Heaven. Our memories will intensify our love for God of mercy and therefore increase our joy. If we forgot we were desperate sinners, how could we appreciate the depth and meaning of Christ's redemptive work for us?
- Even though God will wipe away the tears and sorrow attached to this world, he will not erase from our minds human history and Jesus intervention. Christ resurrected body had nail scarred hands and feet.

*John 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."*

- Seeing those scars in Heaven will always remind us that our sins nailed Jesus to the cross. Heaven's happiness won't be dependent on our ignorance of what happened on Earth rather, it will be enhanced by our informed appreciation of God's glorious grace and justice as we grasp what really happened here.
- The New Earth will include memorials to the twelve tribes and the apostles. This indicates continuity and memory of history. If we are aware of other's past on the old earth, surely we'll be aware of our own.

*Revelation 21:12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: **13** three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. **14** Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

- We will have ethnic and national identities as we have here on this earth.

*Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, **10** And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."*

- Like this earth we will be a melting pot of ethnic diversity, but unlike this earth each group will be united by our common worship of King Jesus. We will delight in each other's differences, never to resent or be frightened of them. Since this will be the way it will be for

all of eternity it might be a good idea to start appreciating our differences now, knowing that God has created all of us in his image.

*Luke 6:2 Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh. 22 Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven,*

- Lost opportunities restored. Some of us probably wished we did things differently on this earth like spending more time with families and friends, doing something different with our lives and I think God will give this opportunity back to us. In Heaven we'll have unlimited time. We'll be able to spend time with lost friends, family members and people we always wanted to meet but didn't. People who have given their life for the Lord who were snatched away from their families deprived of opportunities with their children. Wouldn't it be just like Jesus to reward them on the New Earth with opportunities to do the very things they missed and far better as well? Heaven doesn't only offer comfort it also offers compensation.
- We have every reason to look forward to recognizing and remembering our family and friends in Heaven. We'll rejoice in God's presence for the things we experienced together both good and bad, because we'll view them through God's perspective. We will see and understand his purpose for everything that happened while we walked on Earth. Our relationships are not accidents and don't happen by chance. God has chosen the timing and circumstances of all our relationships. Both here and eternity.

*Acts 17:25-26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,*

- One of the greatest things about Heaven is that we'll no longer have to battle our desires. They'll always be pure, attending to their proper objects. We'll have many desires, but they won't be unholy desires. Everything we want will be good. Our desires will please God. We'll enjoy food without gluttony and eating disorders. We'll express admiration and affection without lust, fornication or betrayal. Because when we delight in God and abide in him, whatever we want will be exactly what He wants for us.

*Psalms 37:4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

- Although we will experience rest from our labor, we will have the energy and passion for doing the kind of work in Heaven that will energize and fulfill us. This work will bring us significance and joy. We'll be grateful for the opportunity to bring unending glory to God.

## Scriptures

*1 Corinthians 15:6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.*

*1 Thessalonians 3:6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you-*

*1 Thessalonians 3:9-10 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, **10** night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?*

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. **14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. **15** 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 by no means precede those who are asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

*Ephesians 2:14-16 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, **15** having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, **16** and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.*

*Ephesians 5:31-32 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **32** This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

*Genesis 1:28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

*Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."*

*Jeremiah 31:34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."*



*John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."*

*Luke 6:21 Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh.*

*Luke 8:19-21 Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. **20** And it was told Him by some, who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You." **21** But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."*

*Luke 9:29-33 As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. **30** And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, **31** who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. **32** But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. **33** Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said.*

*Luke 16:9 And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.*

*Mark 10:29-30 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, **30** who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.*

*Matthew 22:30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.*

*Matthew 25:23 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

*Revelation 5:10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."*

*Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

*Revelation 21:24-26 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. **25** Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). **26** And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.*

*Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

## REFLECTIONS

### Day 36 – Resting and Working

Although we will experience rest from our labor, we will have the energy and passion for doing the kind of work in Heaven that will energize and fulfill us. This work will bring us significance and joy. We'll be grateful for the opportunity to bring unending glory to God.

***Revelations 14:13*** *Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

**Reflection:** How can you begin to glorify God in everything you do today? What can you do to begin to understand His perspective in every circumstance in which you find yourself?

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## REFLECTIONS

### **Day 37** – Remembering and Recognizing

We have every reason to look forward to recognizing and remembering our family and friends in Heaven. We'll rejoice in God's presence for the things we experienced together, both good and bad, because we'll view them through God's perspective. We will see and understand His purposes for everything that happened while we walked on this earth.

***1 Thessalonians 4:13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.***

***1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.***

**Reflection:** write out your praises to God for His plans and purposes for your time here on earth. Ask Him to open your eyes to see His goodness and love in the midst of trials and struggles. How can you begin to let His love for you surpass every loss, confusion, and grief you experience on this earth?

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 38 – Marriage and Family**

The Bible teaches that there will be only one marriage in Heaven, the marriage between Christ and His bride, the Church. All believers in Christ will be included as His bride. God’s ideal for marriage will finally be realized and we’ll enjoy fully satisfying relationships.

*Ephesians 5:31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

**Reflection:** How can you begin to glorify God daily in your family relationships?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 39 – Friendships in Heaven: Old and New

Most people have some close friends; some people have only one very close friend with several acquaintances. Others have several friends they consider close to them and many they call acquaintances. These relationships are not accidents and don't happen by chance. God has chosen the timing and circumstances of all our relationships, both here and in eternity.

*Acts 17:26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,*

**Reflection:** God created us to need other people and one day all our friendships will rise to their highest levels, nourished in God's presence. How do you feel about meeting new people and developing new friendships in Heaven? What sounds exciting about the idea?

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 40 – Lost Opportunities Regained**

Jesus promised that though our sufferings, we will be rewarded in Heaven. And He has promised that He is working all things for our good now (Romans 8:28). But we may also feel a sense of loss when remembering missed opportunities and we can have confidence that in Heaven we will be comforted, fulfilled and rewarded. Missed opportunities will be new opportunities when the curse is lifted and death is forever reversed.

*Luke 6:21 Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh.*

*Luke 6:23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

**Reflection:** What lost opportunities would you like God to restore on the New Earth? Who do you now that you would like to see God reward for their faithfulness by restoring their lost opportunities? How do God’s character and His promises in the Bible give you confidence that he will do this?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 41 – Races and Nations

Like the current Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem will have a diverse mix of ethnic groups and nationalities. But unlike the current city, the groups in the New Jerusalem will be united by their common worship of King Jesus. They will delight in each other's differences, and never resent them or be frightened by them.

***Revelations 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."***

**Reflection:** How do you think God will be glorified in Heaven by our differences? What can people do today to glorify God through, and/or in spite of, our differences?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 42 – The Development of Culture

Things like art, music, literature, crafts, technology, clothing, jewelry, education, food preparation – all are part of society or culture, the creative accomplishments of God’s image-bearers. Way back in Genesis 2 we begin to see culture taking shape. Revelation 21:24 and 26 give the biblical basis to believe that the best culture, history, art, music, and languages of the old earth will be redeemed, purified and carried over to the New Earth.

***Revelation 21:24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.***

***Revelation 21:26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.***

**Reflection:** What do you look forward to seeing in the culture on the New Earth? How do you think this will glorify God in eternity?

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## WEEK 7 OUR GREATEST ADVENTURE

- Consider this list of 9 Places Unhappy People Look for Happiness.
  1. **In their next purchase.** For too many, it has been ingrained into their thinking the proper way to attain happiness is to find it in their next purchase. As a result, happiness is sought in bigger houses, nicer cars, cooler technology, or more fashionable clothing. Most possessions never satisfy. In fact, the joy they bring is entirely fleeting. And those who search for happiness in them are left to chase the next purchase... and the next... and the next.
  2. **In their next paycheck.** Perhaps, Zig Ziglar said it best, *“Money won’t make you happy, but everybody wants to find out for themselves.”* I know happy people who own less than me and I know unhappy people who own far more. Money is not the secret to happiness. It never has been and never will be. And the sooner we realize this truth, the sooner we can discover the freedom that accompanies no longer desiring riches.
  3. **In their next relationship.** We were designed for relationship and there is great happiness to be found in them. But relationship, by its very nature, requires humility and selflessness. And believing there is another person out there that can bring complete happiness into your life is to embark on a journey with no destination and often with disastrous outcomes. Our relationships become far stronger and more fulfilling when we stop searching for someone to meet our needs and start using relationships to meet someone else’s needs instead.
  4. **In their next physical enhancement.** Healthy bodies and healthy diets are important. They allow us to maximize our days and effectiveness. But those who seek happiness in slimmer waists, and larger biceps are looking for fulfillment in physical bodies that were never designed to bring such outcomes. Happy people understand the importance of physical discipline. But they do not base their happiness on their physical appearance.
  5. **In their next competition.** I have come to understand the mindset of competition in our world is based on a faulty premise. It assumes there is a finite sized pie—that one person’s success in life equals one less opportunity in mine. But this thinking is incorrect. The pie keeps growing. And those who seek happiness by ruthlessly beating out another compete only against themselves. In reality, the quickest way to find happiness in your life is to help someone else find it in theirs.
  6. **In their next job.** It is important to pursue work you love in an occupation that contributes good to society and the world around you. This type of work brings fulfillment and promise to our lives. Unfortunately, I fear too many people nowadays are seeking the “perfect” job with high pay, few hours, and no stress. But the perfect job doesn’t exist. Work always requires blood, sweat, and tears—that is what makes it work. Again, those who are continually experiencing disdain in their present career because they think the next one will be perfect, are chasing

happiness in the wrong places. While there may be a time for change in employment, there may also be a time for change in your approach to it.

7. **In their next escape.** Unhappy people seek escape. They believe distraction from their present circumstance is a shortcut to happiness. They often turn to television, addiction, or weekend getaways to numb the pain. But the entertainment always ends, the morning always comes, and the vacation always concludes. Meanwhile, the present circumstances have not changed—they have only been complicated. Happy people recognize their circumstances and do not require escape from them. Instead, they choose to practice peace inside them.
  8. **In the next person to solve their problems.** Blame is a dangerous habit and a very real obstacle to happiness. Shifting the responsibility for shortcomings onto another person or external factor immediately eliminates any need or motivation to change. Instead, the victim remains trapped in a cell they built themselves—waiting for someone else to come solve their problems for them. But every time we blame someone else for our unhappiness, we lose. And in the long run, it keeps fulfillment and happiness just out of reach.
  9. **In accepting things just the way they are.** Happiness can be discovered at any point in our lives regardless of our circumstances. But finding happiness in them does not mean we are complacent in the face of things that can be changed. It does not mean we stop striving or growing or maturing. We do not use happiness or contentment as an excuse for mediocrity. Instead, we walk forward in confidence and discipline to become the best possible versions of ourselves—not just for our own well-being, but for the well-being of others.
- Joy is the quiet, confident assurance of God’s love and work in our lives that He will be there no matter what. Happiness depends on Happenings, but joy depends on Christ.
  - We are so busy looking for happiness we miss the Joy of Jesus that He wants to give us.

*Matthew 25:21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

*John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*

*Luke 1:14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.*

*Luke 2:10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.*

*Luke 24:52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,*

*John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.*

*John 16:22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.*

*John 17:12-13 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. **13** But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.*

*Acts 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

#### Watch DVD

- While we expect to experience disappointments in this life, the life that awaits us in Heaven is filled with excitement, adventure and fulfilled dreams. One misconception about heaven is that it will be boring. The truth is that our imaginative and exciting God created the beauty, splendor and majesty in the world for us to explore and enjoy. Everything that we currently love about this creation will be renewed again on the New Earth. Not only that, but God also created us with a capacity to do the very things that he set in our hearts to dream. Heaven will be more exciting and more fulfilling than any experience we've had here on earth.

*Luke 6:23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

*Psalms 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

- Without eternal perspective, without understanding the reality that the best is yet to come, we assume that people who die too young, who are handicapped, who aren't healthy, who don't get married or whatever other reason you might have, will inevitably miss out on the best life has to offer. But the theology behind those assumptions is fatally flawed. We're presuming that our present Earth, bodies, culture, relationships and lives are superior to those on the New Earth.
- Think of what God might have in store for those who didn't have on this earth, but kept God close in their heart. We may have not had dreams fulfilled here on this earth, but I can see where God will grant those dreams and so much more when we get home. People who died for their faith and left families behind will be brought together, handicapped or people who suffered with health issues will be running and doing more than the most gifted athlete on this earth. Places you wanted to go and see you'll have an opportunity to see so much more.

If you believe that God loves us so much that he would give us only begotten son so that we may be with him on the New Earth, how much more will that love show us his true majesty?

*Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

- Luke tells of a great number of people who came to Jesus to hear him and to be healed. Consider what might have been going through Jesus' mind as he dealt with his people. He knew the world was full of people whom he wouldn't heal in this life. He also knew that the same people he healed would eventually grow weak again and die. What could Jesus say to such people?

*Luke 6:20-23 Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God. 21 Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh. 22 Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

- Jesus tells the hungry they'll be satisfied. Those whose eyes are swollen with tears will laugh. Those persecuted leap for joy now. Why? Because of their great reward in Heaven later. This is not our only chance at life on earth. God's promise to us is not only to remove the heartbreaks of this earth, but to make up for them. In Heaven we will experience the fulfillment of our God-given dreams and desires that went unrealized on earth.

*Matthew 5:3-5 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*

- Earth is the setting for God's ultimate comfort, for his reversal of life's injustices and tragedies. We will live on what we inherit, the earth.
- Are you living with the disappointment of unfulfilled dreams? In Heaven you'll find fulfillment. Did poverty, poor health, war or lack of time prevent you from pursuing an adventure or dream? Was there something you always wanted to do or place you always wanted to see? Good news. On the New Earth you will have a second chance to do what you dreamed of doing and far more besides.
- The smartest person God ever created in this world may never have learned to read because he or she had no opportunity. The most musically gifted person may never have touched a musical instrument. The greatest athlete may never have competed in a game. The sport you're best at may be a sport you've never tried; your favorite hobby maybe one you've never thought of. The New Earth means we'll regain lost opportunities and inherit many more besides.

- But when we realize that God calls us to be like children and that he'll give us a new universe and unlimited time, then we suddenly get it. We realize we'll have an opportunity to fulfill our dreams. In fact we'll develop bigger dreams. Perhaps that's part of what it means to become like a little child and why childlikeness is necessary for Heaven. Children aren't disillusioned, hopeless and cynical. Their dreams are great and broad. They don't list a hundred reasons why their dreams can't come true. Their dreams fuel their imagination and bring them joy.

*Mark 10:14-15 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."*

- When was the last time you were excited like a child? We should be much more excited about going to Heaven than a child going to Disneyland.
- We should be focused on Heaven each day. We should be genuinely excited about Heaven, because that is what being genuinely excited about God, because Heaven is God's home that he is preparing for us.

*Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

*Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*

- It is God who designed us to live on Earth and to desire an earthly life. And it is our bodily resurrection that will allow us to return to an earthly life, this time freed from sin and the curse.
- Being with Jesus. Gazing at Him. Talking with him. Worshipping him. Embracing him, Eating with him. Walking with him. Laughing with him. Imagine it!
- Letting Heaven fill our thoughts means putting Heaven's priorities into daily practice as we focus on eternity.

*Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-- meditate on these things.*

*Colossians 3:12-15 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let*

*the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

- Knowing that this present world will end and be resurrected into new heavens and a New Earth should profoundly affect our daily behavior.

*2 Peter 3:11-14 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? **13** Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. **14** Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;*

- Anticipating our homecoming will motivate us to live spotless lives here and now. Recognizing our future life on a resurrected Earth can help empower us to stick with a difficult marriage, to persevere in the hard task of caring for an ailing parent or child, or to stay with a demanding job. What we do will either be a reward or something we will have to account for.

*Luke 6:21 Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh.*

- God made us to laugh and to love to laugh. Our theology must include humor if we are to be prepared for an eternity full of celebration, spontaneous laughter, and overflowing joy. When we see God in Heaven, he won't only wipe away our tears; he'll fill our hearts with joy and our mouths with laughter.

*Psalms 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

*Psalms 145:19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.*

- When you experience disappointment and loss as you faithfully serve God, remember that the loss is temporary but the gain will be eternal. The better we use our time and opportunities for God's glory here, the greater our opportunities will be in Heaven. When it comes time for us to leave this earth, we may lose out on some opportunities, but every day spent on the New Earth will be a new opportunity to live out the dreams that matter most.

*Matthew 6:19 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

- Sadly many Christians store up most of their treasures on earth so that every day they move closer to death, they move farther from their treasures. We should store up our treasures in

Heaven so the closer we are to death the closer we are to our treasures. As we spend our lives heading toward our treasures by making daily choices to honor God, we will have reason to rejoice.

*Hebrews 11:16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

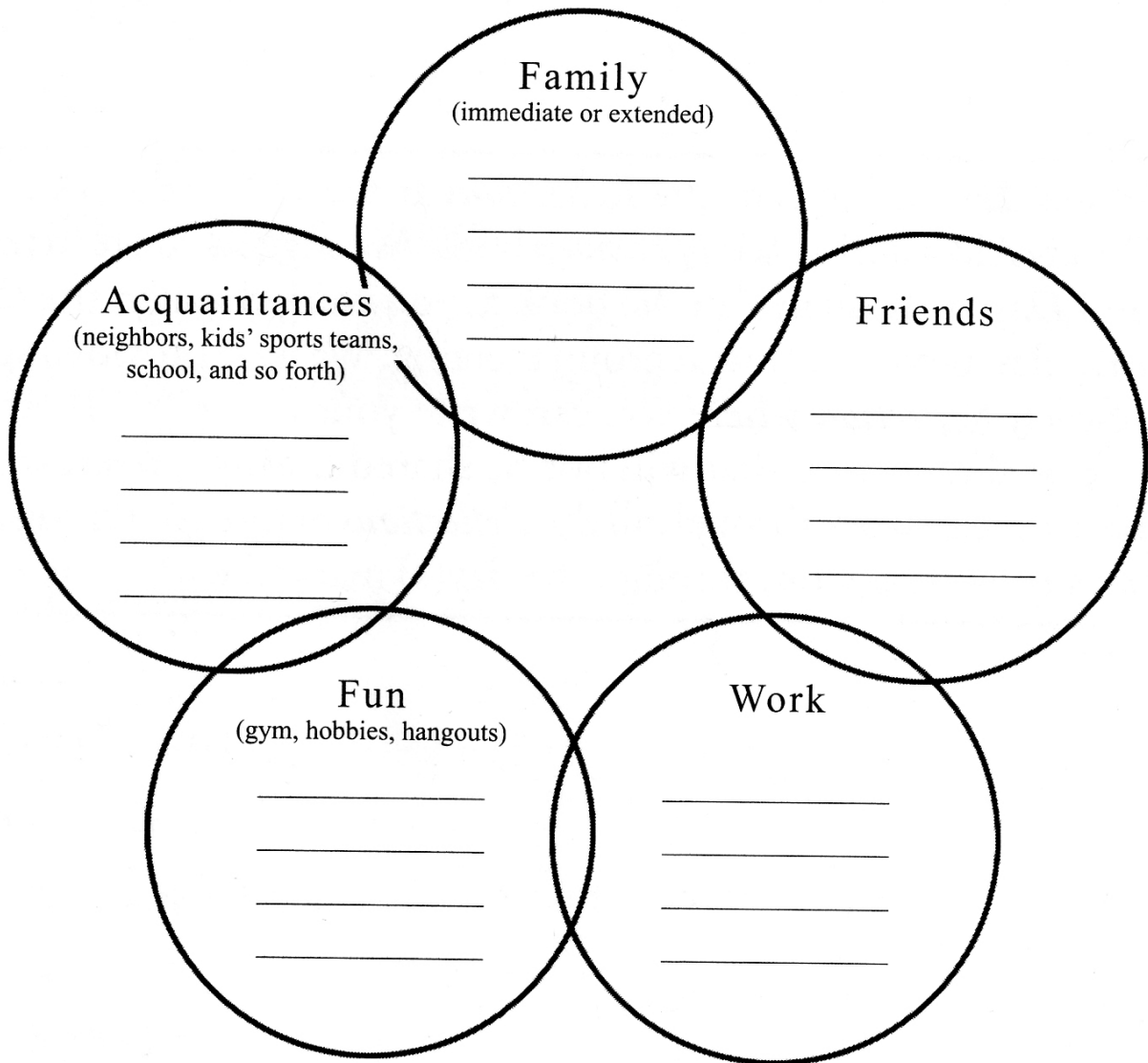
- Every thought of Heaven should move our hearts toward God, just as every thought of God will move our hearts toward Heaven. Heaven is not an idol that competes with God; it is a lens by which we see God more clearly. If Heaven fills our hearts and minds, God will fill our hearts and minds.

*Colossians 3:1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

- Each of us will someday die. Since the majority of our lives will be spent on the other side of death, we must be careful in this life to prepare for what awaits us there. We should be so excited about what's on the other side of death's door that we live our life as a great adventure with one destination in mind, Heaven.
- I'm sure all of us have at least one moment in our lives that was so wonderful we said it doesn't get any better than this. No matter how difficult your life has been, you've said this about some magnificent moment in your life. Can you think of a moment in your life, even a fleeting moment, that it seemed too good to be true? The most ordinary moment on the New earth will be greater than the most perfect moment in this life, those experiences you wanted to bottle or hang on to but couldn't. It can get better, far better, than this, and it will. Life on the New Earth will be like sitting in front of a fire with family and friends, basking in the warmth, laughing uproariously, dreaming of the adventures together. With no fear that life will ever end or that tragedy will descend like a dark cloud. With no fear that dreams will be shattered or relationships broken.
- So now that we know that Hell is the default destination for anyone who does not receive Jesus as Lord and savior, what should be our mission here on earth? I know I have family, friends and work associates are still on the wrong path and I keep too quiet about the good news of Jesus. I also know if I speak up that the condemnation no longer is on me, but the decision is theirs. So we need to make a decision is the chance for an uncomfortable moment worth the price of a soul that will be damned forever? Take a look at the circles of Life diagram and think of two or three people you know who need to know the truth of Jesus. Then pray and ask God how you can be used to bring that news to them.

*Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*





- There is only one thing we can bring to Heaven and that's people.
- Since this study I've had several people approach me about their struggle or the struggle of a loved one in regards to depression. If you're depressed, you may imagine your life has no purpose-but you couldn't be more wrong. As long as God keeps you here on Earth, it's exactly where He wants you. He's preparing you for another world. He knows precisely what He's doing. Through your suffering, difficulty, and depression, he's expanding your capacity for eternal joy. Our lives on earth are a training camp to ready us for Heaven. I know depression can be debilitating. Many godly people have experienced it. But if you are considering giving up, recognize this as the devil's temptation. Jesus said that Satan is a liar and a murderer

*John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

*1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

- Don't listen to the liar. Listen to Jesus, the truth teller. Don't make a terrible ending to your life's story-finish your God given course on Earth. When He's done-not before-he'll take you home in his own time and way. Meanwhile, God has a purpose for you here on this earth. Don't desert your post. If you don't know Jesus, confess your sins and embrace his death and resurrection on your behalf. If you don't know him, make your daily decisions in light of your destiny. Ask yourself what you can do today, next week, next year, or decades from now to write the best ending to this volume of your life's story-a story that will continue gloriously in the new universe. By God's grace, use the time you have left on the present Earth to store up for yourself treasures on the new earth, to be laid at Christ's feet for his glory. Then look forward to meeting in Heaven Jesus himself. As well as those touched by your Christ-exalting choices. So why are you still here? Because God is giving you a chance to store up treasures and earn rewards that will last for all eternity.

*Ephesians 2: [10] For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

*1 Peter 2: [12] Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

*Psalms 62:12 and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.*

*Isaiah 49:4 But I said, "I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand, and my reward is with my God."*

*Jeremiah 32: [19] great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve.*

*Matthew 5: [12] Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you*

*Revelations 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.*

- We will only be here on this earth for a little while longer before going home. I remember when my parents would go on vacation and my sister and I stayed home with our

grandparents. We couldn't wait until they came home, because they would bring us back something from their journey. When you get home what will you bring home from your journey to your Father? Will it be something priceless like a life lived for Him, doing His will? I so desperately want to hear my Lord say to me

*Matthew 25:21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

## Scriptures

*1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

*Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

*Hebrews 11:16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

*Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

*John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

*Luke 6:20-23 Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God. **21** Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh. **22** Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. **23** Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

*Luke 16:10-12 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. **11** Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? **12** And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?*

*Matthew 5:3-5 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **4** Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. **5** Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*

*Matthew 6:20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.*

*Philippians 1:23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.*

*Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, **14** I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

*Psalms 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

*Revelation 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

*Revelation 21:3-5 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." <sup>5</sup> Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

*Revelation 7:15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.*

*Revelation 22:3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.*

## REFLECTIONS

### Day 43 – Laughter

God made us to laugh and to love to laugh. Our theology must include humor if we are to be prepared for an eternity full of celebration, spontaneous laughter, and overflowing joy. When we see God in Heaven, He won't only wipe away our tears, He'll fill our hearts with joy and our mouths with laughter.

*Luke 6:21 Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh.*

**Reflection:** How are you experiencing the joy of Christ so that your life is full of laughter now? Are you looking forward to laughing in Heaven?

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 44 – No More Boredom**

Satan would have us believe that sin is exciting but righteousness is boring. On the contrary, freedom from sin is what allows us to be who God intended and to find far greater joy in everything. Once in Heaven, we'll experience even greater joys than we knew on earth. We will work, play and serve God while we reign with Him for eternity, this will certainly not be boring.

***Psalms 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.***

**Reflection:** Of all the exciting things we'll do in Heaven that bring God glory, what are some you look forward to most?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 46 – New Opportunities on the New Earth

When you experience disappointment and loss as you faithfully serve God, remember that the loss is temporary but the gains will be eternal. The better we use our time and opportunities for God’s glory here, the greater our opportunities will be in Heaven. When it comes time for us to leave this earth, we may lose out on some opportunities, but every day spent on the New Earth will be a new opportunity to live out the dream that matter most.

***Luke 16:10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.***

**Reflection:** How are you spending your life faithfully serving God while on this earth? What opportunities on the New Earth excite you?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 47 – Plus Ultra: More Beyond

Sadly, many Christians store up most of their treasures on earth so that every day they move closer to death, they move farther from their treasures. We should store up our treasures in Heaven so the closer we are to death the closer we are to our treasures. As we spend our lives heading toward our treasures by making daily choices to honor God, we will have reason to rejoice.

*Matthew 6:20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

**Reflection:** What choices are you making today that put your treasures in Heaven?

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## REFLECTIONS

### Day 48 – No Rivalry Between Christ and Heaven

Every thought of Heaven should move our hearts toward God, just as every thought of God will move our hearts towards Heaven. Heaven is not an idol that competes with God; it is a lens by which we see God more clearly. If Heaven fills our hearts and minds, God will fill our hearts and minds.

*Hebrews 11:16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

**Reflection:** What do you anticipate most about Heaven and how do you think it will help to move your heart toward God?

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 49 – Reepicheep and Emily**

Each of us will someday die. Since the majority of our lives will be spent on the other side of death, we must be careful in this life to prepare for what awaits us there. We should be so excited about what’s on the other side of death’s door that we live our life as a great adventure with one destination in mind: Heaven.

*Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

**Reflection:** What are some things you can do to increase your anticipation of Heaven, to live in light of eternity?

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**REFLECTIONS**

**Day 50 – It Doesn't Get Any Better Than This...Or Does It?**

Thinking of Heaven inevitably leads to pursuing holiness. It's when our minds drift from Jesus and Heaven, that sin seems attractive. Thinking of Heaven and the New Earth will motivate us to live each day in profound thankfulness to God and lead us to an eternity with the Lord we love and the family and friends we cherish. Our experiences on the New Earth will be far better than the best we have experienced on this earth.

***1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.***

**Reflection:** Whom could you comfort today with the thought that those who love Jesus will someday experience God's best?

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## WEEK 8 EARNING OUR REWARDS NOW

- We have looked at many of God's attributes God the Father, His Humor, compassion, forgiveness, grace, trustworthiness, joy and today one of His greatest attributes, love. Everything that we have discussed, all that we have anything good comes only from His love and his desire is for us to love Him back.

*1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.*

*Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*Romans 8:39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." **38** This is the first and great commandment. **39** And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

*John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

*John 15:9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.*

*John 17:25-26 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. **26** And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

*1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

*Eph 1:4-5 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, **5** having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

*Eph 3:19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

- Jesus was our example of perfect love and His desire is that we love others as He has loved them. Everyone is God's creation and not to love or like someone is telling Jesus we don't like what He created.

*John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*

*John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

*John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*

*Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;*

*Romans 13:8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*

*1 Peter 4:8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."<sup>[3]</sup>*

- We are here tonight at church so we would assume we are all saved, but I want to take a moment to be sure. We have been talking about our eternal home, but it's only that if we received Jesus as Lord and Savior.

*Luke 13:25-27 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' **26** then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' **27** But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'*

- I want to make sure that doesn't happen to anyone. So if there is any doubt in your heart ask Him now for forgiveness, receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior and to come into your heart
- Our Pledge: Lord Jesus I have listened carefully to what You said about my home. I believe You, and I can't wait to be there with you. I renounce my allegiance to this visible and fleeting world and pledge my allegiance to You, King of Heaven. From this day on, I will live as a citizen of Heaven, my true home. As your faithful steward, I will take every gift, opportunity and resource that you place in my hands and multiply it greatly for You. And I eagerly look forward to the day in eternity when I will stand in your presence and receive your reward, and worship You forever.
- If you are doing poorly now, but you are persevering for God your reward in Heaven is so much more than all the riches in this current world. The only place you can earn rewards is here on earth before you go home. This will establish what you will be doing in Heaven and once you get home it's too late to add to your rewards.
- Most religions state what we do on earth determines if we are going to Heaven. If you're a good person you'll go to Heaven if not there is another destination. What we do on earth after we receive Jesus matters very much, but it doesn't decide if we go to Heaven, only the belief in Jesus will get you there.

- We have the assurance of Scripture that all believers will survive the fire of testing and be raised. But it is not only ourselves that will outlast this world and be carried over to the new one. It is what we do with our lives. Our righteous works will follow us to Heaven. Not only with some things that God made survive His judgment, but so will some things we have done. Products of faithful lives will endure. They will be purified and laid bare, so their beauty will be forever seen. God's fire will not destroy the whole earth, it will destroy all that displeases him. But there is much that pleases him, and these things will endure the fire, to be reconstituted after the final resurrection of the dead. Not only will acts of obedience and spiritual sacrifices be carried over from one world to the next, but everything else good will also follow.

*Luke 6:23 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

- The Greek word used in Jesus' teachings in Luke 6 is mishos (mees thous). Literally, it means wages.
- Jesus used the same word later when He spoke of earthly wages

*Matthew 20:8 So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.'*

- Paul told Timothy

*1 Timothy 5:18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."*

- Everyone who heard Jesus understood exactly what He meant. When you labor on earth, your employer gives you mishos. And when you labor for Me, I pay wages, too. Jesus never described His reward as a charitable tip or a token of appreciation, He called it wages, something you earn resulting from something you do.

- Another word used for reward in Heaven is apodidomai. It's a compound word apo (*apo'*) means back and didomai (*did'-o-mee*) means to give. Combined it means to give back in return or repay.

*Luke 14:14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."*

- Jesus also used this term in His well known story about the good Samaritan, who stopped to help a traveler that had been beaten and robbed.



*Luke 10:35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'*

- What Jesus is saying that we will be repaid or be reimbursed a full measure for what we do on His behalf. God will not only repay you for grand acts of personal sacrifice, but for every day acts of love.

- Seven things that God will reward us for;

1. God will reward us for seeking Him through spiritual acts such as fasting and praying

*Matthew 6:6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly*

2. God will reward us for submitting to our employer as a faithful steward.

*Colossians 3:22-24 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. **23** And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.*

*Matthew 24:45-47 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? **46** Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. **47** Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.*

*Ephesians 6:8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

3. God will reward us for self denial in His service

*Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. **25** For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. **26** For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? **27** For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

4. God will reward us for serving those in need in His name.

*Mark 9:40-41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.*

5. God will reward us for suffering for His name and reputation.

*Luke 6:22-23 Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. **23** Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

6. God will reward us for sacrifices we make for Him.

*Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.*

*Matthew 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.*

7. God will reward us for sharing of our time, talent and treasure to further His kingdom.

*Matthew 6:3-4 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*

*1 Timothy 6:18-19 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, **19** storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

- In Hebrews the word rewarder is the combination of the words misthos (mees thous) and apodidomai and unusual combination which means God pays back your wages in return. God chooses to reward because it is an expression of His own generous nature. His plan to reward, like His provision to save, is a display of His amazing grace.

*Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

- It might be similar to when the medals are passed out at the Olympics.

*2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

- There are two important phrases. When Paul writes that each on may receive, he is clearly indicating reward or repayment and when he says things done in the body, he is restricting the rewards to things you did while we were on earth.

*1 Corinthians 3:13-15 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.*

*14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

- So how do we determine what works will be burned like straw or endure like Gold? The fire would need to test not only what we did, but also how and why we did it. Three tests to help us evaluate whether what we do for God will endure.

1. The test of relationship. It might relieve you to know that a life God rewards is not about performance apart from relationship with Jesus. In fact just the opposite is true. Jesus said:

*John 15:5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*

- In the book of Revelations Jesus commended the church at Ephesus for its many good works, but was grieved because they did not keep their love for Him alive.

*Revelation 2:2 I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

2. The test of motive. Jesus said:

*Matthew 6:1 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

- What should be our motive? To serve God and bring Him glory. Even ordinary actions like eating and drinking can bring God glory.

*1 Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

- By contrast the most religious actions are worthless if our motive is to build up our own ego or reputation. This may cause some us problems and me included. At times we feel we

should serve or do something maybe out of guilt or we want the recognition that goes along with it. My wife and I have done different events where at one point they want to bring us out of the kitchen to thank us. We typically don't want to go but when we do we may take a bow and point upwards.

3. The test of love. True good works are always focused on sincerely trying to improve the well-being of another. Jesus said:

*Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.*

- In Paul's favorite passage on love, he pointed out that good deeds done without love profits you nothing.

*1 Corinthians 13:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.*

- To do good works for the wrong reason will just be lost.

*1 Corinthians 3:15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

- When we stand before Jesus in judgment we may suffer loss of rewards. It is possible to step into eternity with few good works to show for our lifetime on earth.

*2 John 1:8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.*

- Before doing anything check your heart to make sure you are doing it for our Lord. The moment Jesus gives us our rewards for our life, when we finally and completely see and understand all that God has done for us and in us and through us, and we know fully that without Him we could not have done even one commendable work for Him, our overwhelming response will be to cry out in thanks and praise Him. At that moment, out of sheer joy and gratitude, we'll want to worship at the feet of the Lord Jesus and give back everything He has just given to us, but Jesus wants us to keep it all. His plan for us is to enjoy and make good use of the rewards for all of eternity. Do good works with the gifts and talents God has given you, that's why you have them.
- God's word puts service high on our list of things to do. Jesus said that was why He was here.

*Matthew 20:26-28 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. <sup>27</sup> And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be*

*your slave-- 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

- We have been called to be both a servant and a steward. Both serve, but the difference is that a steward has been charged with managing his master's assets. In Jesus stories we often see a pattern: the steward/servant is charged with managing something important for his master while the master is away for an extended period of time. This is the time when the steward will either fail or succeed at his mission and impact his future. Jesus told these parables because he was going away and was intrusting us with the job to increase His kingdom. Then in the future He will ask for an accounting and reward His servants, "each according to his works."

*Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

- We have been commissioned to manage His asset, our life which is the sum of our talents, strengths, personality and interests. Our opportunity is to manage our life in a way that will increase our Master's kingdom. We need to ask ourselves how we are going to manage what our Master put into our care. The Bible uses the word faithful more than any other word describe the conduct of a good steward.

*1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.*

- The two best parables about stewardship are the parable of the Minas and the parable of the Talents. In the parable of the minas in Luke.

*Luke 19:12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' 15 And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20 Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' 25 (But they said to him,*

*'Master, he has ten minas.')* **26** For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. **27** But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.' "

- One thing I didn't notice until now as the second servant, even though he increased what his master had given him and received a reward in proportion to his return was that the master didn't tell him well done or good servant or even because you were faithful in very little. The lesser level of commendation shows that the master knew the servant could have done better. Then of course the third servant who did nothing with what he was given was condemned for his action or lack of. This is not unlike how things go here on the present earth, those who prove themselves will be given a better position, those who just get by will stay in their position and those who don't perform will get fired.
- The parable about the talents is different since each servant was given a different amount.

*Matthew 25:14 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. **15** And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. **16** Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. **17** And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. **18** But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. **19** After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. **20** So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' **21** His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' **22** He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' **23** His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' **24** Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. **25** And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' **26** But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. **27** So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. **28** Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. **29** For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. **30** And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

- In this case two servants double what they have been given. Yet when the master returns, he gives the same commendation and reward to both, because a servant's reward is based on total results in the light of their potential. In the same way we will be rewarded by Jesus on what we did with what was given.

- We will desperately want to serve God in Heaven. Doing is a servant's language of devotion. In heaven, more opportunity to do God's will through loving service will be our highest reward. Serving and ruling are the same in Heaven. Jesus told his disciples that

*Matthew 19:28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

- The highest reward in the parable of the minas was to rule over 10 cities and in the talents it was the same.
- In the parable about the rich man who wanted to follow Jesus

*Matthew 19:21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."*

- When the man turned down Jesus' offer and left, Peter stepped forward to ask the obvious question

*Matthew 19:27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"*

- Jesus never scolded Peter for his self-interest or smiled and said I wasn't actually serious about treasures in heaven. He gave a most revealing answer. Jesus told Peter that he and the other disciples would rule over the nation of Israel when He set up His kingdom. Then He said

*Matthew 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.*

- A hundredfold is the equivalent of a 10,000 percent return.
- Jesus most familiar teaching on treasure is in the Sermon on the Mount.

*Matthew 6:19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where*

*neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

- You might think that you don't have a lot to give, but our most precious treasure here on earth is time. Jesus wasn't saying that treasures don't matter or that He didn't want us to have any. Just the opposite. He wants us to provide for ourselves, because He knows that treasures will matter in eternity and He wants us to have a lot.

*Luke 16:10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. 11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?*

- Everything we have is on loan from God. Jesus is showing how a steward can succeed with someone else's money. He uses the word faithful four times. When you serve God you are using God's money to accomplish His wishes, but when you serve money you are using God's money to accomplish your wishes.

*Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

- We must first be saved by the blood of Jesus before any rewards will be granted. Without Jesus our acts of kindness and righteous living will only mean that a person will not suffer as much in Hell as for instance Hitler.

*Matthew 23:14 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.*

*Matthew 11:23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."*

*Romans 2:5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,*

- Heaven never gets worse only better, Hell never gets better, only worse

*Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*



- There was a missionary couple who spent their entire life serving God in some far corner of the world. After forty years they wrote their supporters that they were coming home to England. When they saw their country's coastline for the first time in decades, the man said to his wife, "I wonder if anyone will be here to welcome us home." As the ship sailed into harbor they saw to their surprise throngs of people crowding the dock, pointing in their direction and cheering. A band played, men held up a banner that read, Welcome home, we're proud of you. The husband was deeply moved and they both laughed with joy. As they went down to the gangplank they were taken aback. The crowd had already started to disperse. Soon, it became clear what had happened. The crowd was not for them, but for a politician returning from some foreign success. In fact no one was there for them at all. The husband couldn't hide his disappointment. "After a lifetime of service, this isn't much of a welcome home." His wife took his arm, "Come along sweetheart. This is just England. We're not home yet."
- Sometimes we don't serve wholeheartedly, because we don't see the rewards here on earth. I know I have done things that I knew was from God and was expecting to hear the praise of the crowd, but didn't.
- In Malachi a group of worshippers felt this way.

*Malachi 3:14 You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the LORD of hosts?'*

- Have you ever felt that way or cried out to God what's the use? Here is what God did.

*Malachi 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.*

- Why is God writing a book of remembrance? To reassure His people that He does watch and care. And at a point in the future, he will reveal its contents.

*Malachi 3:17-18 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him." **18** Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.*

- He will open His book of remembrance. And the truth about His generosity faithfulness and justice will be evident to all. Not one act of service in His name will have gone unnoticed or unrewarded.

*Revelation 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work."*

- So will you live for what you can see, knowing it will soon disappear? Or will you live for eternity?
- One of my greatest rewards will be to hear from my Lord,
- Mathew 25:**21** *His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

## Scriptures

*Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."*

*Revelation 4:4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.*

*Job 34:11 For He repays man according to his work, And makes man to find a reward according to his way.*

*Psalms 58:11 So that men will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth."*

*Proverbs 11:18 The wicked man does deceptive work, But he who sows righteousness will have a sure reward.*

*Proverbs 25:21-22 If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; **22** For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, And the LORD will reward you.*

*Isaiah 40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.*

*Isaiah 49:4 Then I said, 'I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD, And my work with my God.' "*

*Matthew 5:12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

*Matthew 6:4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. [*

*Matthew 6:6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly*

*Matthew 10:42 And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."*

*Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

*Mark 9:41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.*

*Luke 6:23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

*Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.*

*Luke 14:13-14 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.  
14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."*

*1 Corinthians 3:8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.*

*1 Corinthians 3:14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.*

*Colossians 2:18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,*

*Colossians 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.*

*Hebrews 11:26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.*

*2 John 1:8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.*

*Revelation 11:18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."*

*Revelation 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*

*Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

*1 Corinthians 9:25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*

*2 Timothy 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

*James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

*1 Peter 5:4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

*Revelation 2:10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

*Revelation 3:11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*