



Session 15: Heaven



Preparation:

Read the 'Heaven' chapter in *Fly Through the Bible*.

 **Bible readings:** Revelation 21 & 22, Luke 23:43, Hebrews 11:16, Matt. 8:11, Isaiah 65.

Introduction:

The leader can introduce the session by saying:

Jesus spoke frequently of heaven in the Gospels. Wonderfully, God's people will live in heaven for eternity, in God's presence. This is, as Colin describes, God's ultimate gift to His people. The Bible describes heaven itself, and the glories that will be found there. But the Bible also tells us how the anticipation of heaven can encourage us on earth. Let's open the Bible and explore how the Bible describes heaven. Let's meditate on this and be encouraged.

First we are going to say a short prayer to ask God to work amongst us. Would someone be able to pray for us?

[Suggested prayer if you need one: Lord, please be with us now as we come around your Word together. Please renew in each of us a joy in you, a joy in your presence journeying with us, and a joy in your Word. Please let us leave here today with encouragement in our hearts. Amen]

READ the Bible Together

Would anyone be happy to read a short passage of Scripture?
Revelation 21:1-5, 22:1-5, Luke 23:43, Hebrews 11:16, Matt. 8:11, Isaiah 65: 17-18, 25b?

WATCH 'Heaven' Together





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✦ EXPLORE the Bible Together

✦ 'A Low Pass'

- How does Revelation 21:1-5 and 22:1-5 describe heaven? What is it like and who is there? (a: specific verses e.g. new, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, God is there, dwelling with us, his people... etc...)
- How does Revelation 21:1-5 and 22:1-5 describe what is not in heaven, and what is not needed in heaven? (a: sea is no more (someone may mention the significance of this...), death shall be no more, no mourning, pain crying, pain, former things passed away... etc)
- Jesus in Luke 23 describes heaven as 'paradise' and in Hebrews 11:16 heaven is described as a 'better country'. What specifically from these passages makes you think of heaven as 'paradise' and 'a better country'? How does this encourage you today?
- In Isaiah 65:18-19 God tells us about the new heaven and the new earth He has prepared for the future. How does this encourage you? Do you think God wants us to be encouraged by our being able to envision our future? (a: 'be glad and rejoice', you can notice the tenses that are used in the passages, they are encouraging and interesting, all who trust in the Lord will be comforted, provided for and given an eternity in heaven, the sorrows of the present are fully soothed in our future glory. The wider passages describe the path to heaven or hell, but the focus here is on heaven.)

✦ 'High Altitude Pass'

- What is your reaction to the gift of heaven?
- What do you think you will enjoy in heaven?
- There are quite a few places in the Bible where we are given a glimpse of who will be in heaven. Jesus in Matthew 8 describes Abraham, Isaac and Jacob being there (other examples are 1 Sam.12:23, Hebrews 11). Does this encourage you? If yes, why?
- In Revelation John describes this new Jerusalem as a familiar cityscape, a place where God dwells. How does this connect with what we have learned about God, His people and Jerusalem in the Old Testament? (a: Jerusalem is full of significance in the Bible story. This was where God came down to meet with His people. The old Jerusalem had a holy place where the presence of God came down. The new Jerusalem is a holy place where God's presence will remain.)
- As Colin describes 'God's people will have a better life, better work, better company, and greater joy than any of us have ever known.' How does knowing this encourage you today?
- Talking about heaven can be a great evangelistic opportunity. Imagine this subject comes up in conversation with a friend, what would you say?





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✈️ 'Catching a Connection'

The Old Testament speaks of God gathering people. Take time to explore Deuteronomy 4 (specifically around 4:9-14) and Deuteronomy 33. How does God interact with His people, how is this a shadow of what will come later? Can you find any other references that point towards the gathering or assembling of God's people through the Bible story?

🗨️ PRAY Together

Spurgeon recommended meditating on heaven, "Christian, meditate much on heaven, it will help thee to press on, and to forget the toil of the way. This vale of tears is but the pathway to the better country: this world of woe is but the stepping-stone to a world of bliss. And, after death, what cometh? What wonderworld will open upon our astonished sight?"⁴

Let's use the passages we have read today to pray. Let us use the words to meditate on this amazing sight of heaven that awaits all of God's people. In doing this we can help ourselves 'press on'. Let us allow the words to encourage our hearts in anticipation of this wonderful day when we will be with God forever in heaven.

⁴ C.H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*, (SAGE Software, 1996) p. 77.
<https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/spurgeon/CHS_Morning_and_Evening_Daily_Readings.PDF>

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