

LifeGroup Questions
Based On: Various
June 14, 2015

Overview

Why are there promises about Heaven in the Bible? Have you ever wondered what Christianity would be like if all references to a future paradise were erased? James 4:14 reads: “What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” In this passage the whole sum of life is described as a passing vapor. Without a future paradise and hope then our lives are but a mere wrinkle in the landscape of all eternity. There would be no need for the cross because death would be the final answer. This is why we find sprinkled throughout the scriptures descriptions of heaven. It is this hope of paradise and being in the presence of our Creator that provides strength during this life.

C.S. Lewis once said: “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.” The Apostle Paul states in Philippians 3 that all believers’ citizenship is in Heaven. It is a place where our bodies will be transformed. In 2 Corinthians 5 the Apostle Paul states that believers long to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling. No one can give a complete description of Heaven. As Jesus was hanging on the cross He promised the thief hanging next to him that both of them would be in paradise. There are a lot of words that can be used to describe paradise. Everyone’s definition of paradise differs depending on their own desire. Believers have the promise that God has made a paradise for all of us. Heaven is not an idea of man, but it is a gift from God. Although we do not know exactly what Heaven will be like, we do know what it won’t be like. There will be no more hurt, pain, sorrow, guilt, sadness, loneliness, or death. God, Himself, will wipe away every tear. For believers it is our future eternal home. It is where our citizenship lies. It is a place of praise and hope.

Bible Study:

1. What comes to mind when you think of Heaven? (God, lost loved ones)
2. Read Colossians 3:1-4. In this passage believers are told to set their hearts on things above where Christ is seated. In what ways can believers do this?
3. “There is, therefore, a tension in Christian experience between the earthly and the heavenly, the present and the future; the believer lives in this world while belonging to another, in this age while anticipating the age to come. It is a tension that will be resolved only when Christ “hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power ... so that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15:24, 28).”¹ In what ways does knowing that your future is in Heaven give you hope for the struggles you face today?

¹ Hawthorne, G. F., Martin, R. P., & Reid, D. G. (Eds.). (1993). In *Dictionary of Paul and his letters* (p. 383). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

4. Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. Not only have believers been fashioned to be in Heaven, but a deposit has been made guaranteeing this future hope. Discuss as a group what it means to have a longing to be in Heaven. How does that impact your daily life?
5. Read Philippians 3:20-21. What does it mean to be a citizen of a city, state, and nation? What does it mean to be a citizen of Heaven while living here on earth?
6. Read Revelation 5:4-6. John describes seeing Jesus in Heaven. John starts out by calling Him the Lion from the tribe of Judah, but then he sees a lamb that has been slain. We serve a God who knows our pain. He is both the conquering King and sacrificial lamb. How does knowing that Jesus gave up Heaven to hang on a cross impact your faith?
7. Read Revelation 21:2-4. This is an amazing picture of God . . . that He would wipe away every tear. This promise is also stated in Revelation 7:17. We serve a very personal God. He cares for each and every one of us. What does it mean to you that God would go around and wipe away every tear?