

HEAVEN – Our Dual Citizenship and Our True Home

Week 1: Looking Forward To a Prepared Place

Purpose: To explore Jesus' promise of his future return and a home forever in heaven.

Do you remember the moment you entered the Kingdom of God's son (Col 1:13)? What a moment! Scripture tells us that we are citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20-21) and ambassadors of the Kingdom of heaven here on earth (2 Cor. 5:20). As a citizen of Heaven we are not to let our earthly experience crowd out the reality of our heavenly citizenship. As ambassadors we are duly authorized representatives of the Kingdom of God to speak on our Kings behalf.

Unfortunately there are far too many Christian's who find themselves loving the indulgences of this world more than they love the prospects of the Kingdom of heaven and that should alarm us. Too many duly sworn ambassadors are way to earthly minded to be of any heavenly good, and the grand cause of this mishmash is, too many have an unbiblical understanding of heaven.

Whether intentional or unintentional too many professing believers live with a worldview that does not permit heaven to be properly in their sight. The only way to keep heaven in our minds eye is to read and rehearse the truths of heaven that are found in the word of God. But even when we do that, we find there are many things about heaven that are not easy to understand.

Did you know that heaven is mentioned more than 500 times in the bible? As a prominent doctrine of the bible heaven should always be in a prominent place in our thoughts. As we become more heavenly minded we will actually become more earthly good. God has placed within our hearts a hunger for heaven and eternity, however if we do not understand that and how to feed that hunger we will end up suppressing that need and replacing it with vain and cheap things of this earth that leave us empty and unsatisfied.

We can never estimate all that God has prepared for us in our heavenly home. And we cannot recreate heaven on earth but when we focus on and prepare for our eternal home that is prepared for us our earthly focus shifts and we begin to live in a very real and conscious fellowship with our heavenly Father, a fellowship that honors Him. This fellowship becomes magnetic to others and they are drawn to Him as we fulfill our role as His witnesses.

It would be easy to study this series simply to gain more knowledge, but this is not our Lord's intention. God has shared His word with His children so that we will begin experience in our relationship with Him a real genuine spiritual fellowship even as we are living in our physical

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existence here on the earth. Our study is not simply to learn what the bible says about Heaven but to understand what it means for us to live as Kingdom citizens here on earth as we await the day we will live in our resurrected eternal state with our Lord.

Life Group Study – The Kingdom of Heaven and Our Dual Citizenship

Although you could study this material alone, I want us to experience God's best. When God saved you, He placed you in the body of Christ so that you can benefit from the ministry of others in the body. You are also in the body to help others. The writer of Hebrews instructed us, "Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another" ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#)). I encourage you to join us in our Morning Prayer time as we pray together to start each day as a band of believer and on Wednesday nights ENGAGE in our church wide Deeper Dive study for all believers in Christ as we walk through God's word together. You will find that we need one another, as we help each other live out the deep truths of scripture as dual citizens of heaven and earth, ambassadors of our Lord.

Personal Study of HEAVEN – Our dual citizenship, looking forward to our future home

The aim of our study is not for you to simply read but to actually engage in our churches discipleship by being a part of a life group, experience the power of biblical fellowship, and interact with the Lord, His word and His people as you are discipled. Through our study together you will be given several types of activities to help you and your life group press in, ENGAGE and respond to the Lord as He teaches you in this study.

Five daily readings. Each week you will study God's word before meeting with your life group and you will share what you are learning and how we living out our dual citizenship in the Kingdom of God and being discipled. Don't wait until the day before or the day of your life group meeting to go over your study. Set aside some devotional time to spend with the Lord each day to pray and study for a few minutes, mid-morning break, lunch-time, mid-afternoon or before bed. This will help you develop a daily time to come before the Lord and allow Him to encounter you as you "ENGAGE" and fellowship with Him. For the duration of this series let our study guide you in your daily time with the Lord. By starting the day with your focus on Christ, you will be in a position all day to let God apply His Kingdom truths to your life. As you do this one day at a time, you will "ENGAGE your faith," as a Kingdom citizen learning and growing at a reasonable rate. You will need to study week 1 before our first group session and those handouts will be available Sunday.

Prayer time. Our prayer-time activity will continue each day as we have been doing, praying with a daily devotional emphasis. I encourage you to Journal your prayers as the Lord responds. This will help you start each day with a Kingdom Focus, focusing on the Lord and responding to Him. To live as dual citizens of the Kingdom of God and ambassadors in an abiding relationship with our Lord Jesus we must walk daily with Him as He calls us to exercise His Kingdom authority.

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE FOCUS

¹“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. **John 14:1-3 (ESV)**

OVERVIEW OF WEEK 1

Day 1: Handling Heart Trouble (John 14:1)

Day 4: Do you know The Way (Jn.14:4-6)

Day 2: Overview of My Father’s House

Day 5: The Return & Our Citizenship (Jn.

(John 14:2 Rev 21)

14:3, Phil 3:20)

Day 3: A Prepared Place (Jn.14:3)

VERSES TO MEMORIZE

() **Level 1: John 14:1-3**

() **Level 2: John 14:1-7**

Looking for a Prepared Place

John 14:1–9

As He lay in the hospital bed his family knew didn’t have long left to live on this side. His breathing came in ragged gasps. His eye’s flickered as he seemed to try and focus on his loved ones in the room. “I think I saw heaven last night,” he whispered. “I saw the lights of the city—and it looked like home.”

Home for a follower of Jesus Christ is a place we’ve never been. It’s a place of beauty and rest and wholeness. It’s the place where Jesus is.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What is your favorite room in your home or your parent’s home? What do you like about it?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. In what specific place do you feel most secure?

Where do you feel closest to God?

In the hours before his death Jesus tried to prepare his closest friends for the coming crisis. Two facts were clear: he would be leaving them and they couldn’t come with him. But while they were separated, Jesus would be busy - busy preparing a place for their reunion.

Read John 14:1–9.

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1. What tone of voice do you think Jesus used in verses 1–4?

Do you think his tone changed when he responded to the questions from Thomas (v. 5) and Philip (v. 8)? Explain your answer.

2. What facts about heaven does Jesus relate to his disciples?

3. Why would Jesus’ absence produce troubled hearts in his disciples?

4. What troubles your heart?

Who or what do you turn to or rely on when you are upset?

5. What does Jesus have to do to “prepare” the Father’s house for us?

6. In what ways is Jesus preparing you to go to the Father’s house?

7. What do you expect to see and do in the Father’s house?

8. In light of verse 6, how would you respond to a person who believes that any sincere religious belief leads to heaven?

9. Philip thought that if he could just “see” God, all his questions and doubts would disappear. What was Jesus’ response (v. 9)?

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10. Why did Jesus’ promise to return and take the disciples to be with him bring comfort to them?

How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus has promised to return?

Give your troubles to God and then wait for his comfort to calm your heart.

Living It Out

1. Think of someone who is going through a crisis or difficult time. How do Jesus’ words in John 14 equip you as an ambassador to bring comfort or encouragement to that person?

2. Write a letter, send a card or talk to the person about what you have learned from this passage. Commit yourself to pray for and if possible with them for God to meet that person’s need.